The Queen's Sword of Honour

To the King of Zion

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THROUGH ABYSSINIA:

AN ENVOY'S RIDE TO THE KING OF ZION.

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THE ENVOY AS AN ABYSSINIAN CHIEF OF THE ORDER OF SOLOMON.

THROUGH ABYSSINIA

AN ENVOY'S RIDE TO THE KING OF ZION

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THROUGH ABYSSINIA.

AN ENVOY'S RIDE TO THE KING OF ZION.

I.

INTRODUCTORY.

"NEGOOSA NEGUST," or, "A Visit to the King of Zion," was the title which I originally determined on for this book; but, for cogent reasons urged by the publisher, I decided to discard so incomprehensible a name as "Negoosa Negust," and to substitute that which at present occupies my title-page. Now, I should like to explain that "Negoosa Negust" was not the name of a new sort of bitters. Nor did I desire to deceive a possible reader into the supposition that "A Visit to the King of Zion" was by the author of "Letters from Hell," and intended as an antidote to that sulphurous

draft from the infernal regions. The following narrative is nothing more than an account of a journey into Abyssinia which the writer made in 1886, and any air of the supernatural, which may still surround the title which heads this story, will be swept away by the following explanation.

The late king of Abyssinia was accustomed to be formally styled as "Johannis, made by the Almighty, King of Zion, King of Kings of Ethiopia and its Dependencies." Moreover, his subjects claimed for their country that it is, or was, Zion of the Scriptures. In my forgetfulness of such Scripture history and geography as I once knew, I prefer to leave the discussion of this claim to a Church Congress, or the Royal Geographical Society. Like Acts of Parliament, Johannis, who is also more familiarly known in England as John, had a short title, *i.e.*, Negoosa Negust, which, being translated, signifies King of Kings, and this title was considered to sufficiently keep in memory the fact that John, having crushed all other aspirants to the throne, had unified under his single sceptre

the numerous petty kingdoms into which Abyssinia was formerly divided.

In order to impart as much interest as possible to any political matter which I may introduce, and to render my readers somewhat familiar with the circumstances surrounding me in my travel, I shall attempt to sketch briefly the history of events leading up to the mission which forms the subject of my story.

Abyssinia may be roughly described as a high table-land adjacent to the western shore of the Red Sea. Whatever may have been its claim in the sixteenth century to a seaport, it is certain that since that period its confines have been pushed back, bit by bit, by the aggressions of successive Turkish and Egyptian forces, until its boundaries could not be said to extend beyond the edge of the plateau. Hence the country suffers for want of an outlet, and as a direct consequence its trade has been reduced to a very low ebb of prosperity. In 1874 Egypt occupied the district in the north of Abyssinia called Bogos, and committed other aggres-

sions, and this brought Egypt and Abyssinia into conflict. In the following year the Abyssinians killed rather more than three thousand Egyptians in various battles. Again, a year later, the Egyptians lost about the same number out of six thousand in the advanced guard of an avenging expedition. In 1877, Abyssinia inflicted further defeats on the Egyptians, who, by the terms of a truce which they had entered into, should have remained at Massowah. Two years later came General Gordon's mission, and from then till the end of 1883 relations between Egypt and Abyssinia remained in a strained condition, embittered now and again by occasional raids from one side or the other.

Such was the position of affairs when England became involved in a war in the Eastern Soudan, on behalf of Egypt, against the revolted Soudanese. The futility of England's efforts to subjugate the Soudanese, or to effect the relief of various Egyptian garrisons interned in the Soudan, is a matter of history so recent as to require no telling.

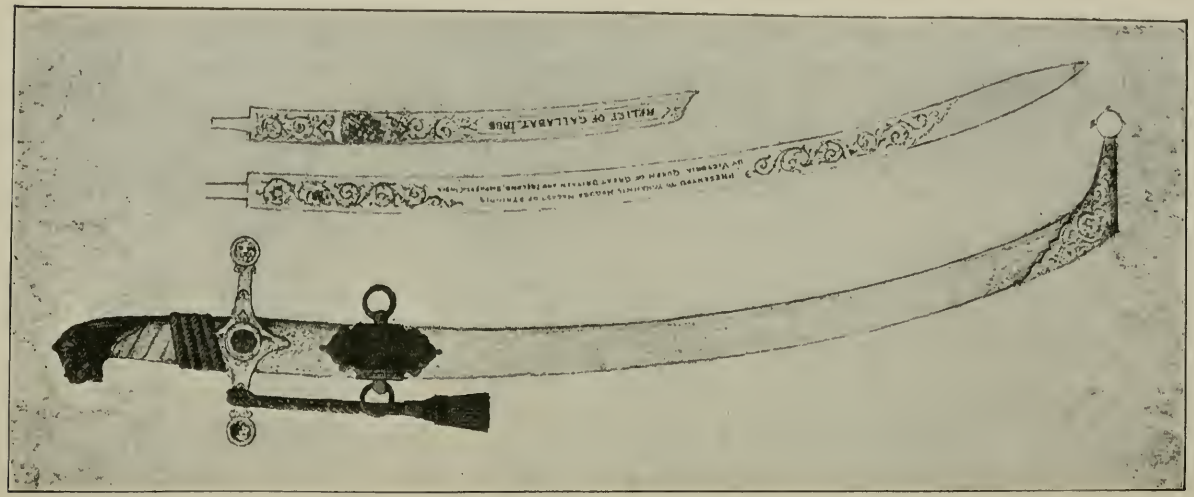
But it was arranged that a British Mission under Admiral Sir William Hewett should endeavour to put an end to the old enmity between Abyssinia and Egypt, and to so far propitiate King John as to induce him to assist the Egyptian troops to the coast.

As a result of this mission the garrisons of certain places were relieved and assisted through Abyssinia to Massowah. The treaty which contained the arrangements, guaranteed to King Johannis the restoration of the Bogos territory and the benefit of a free trade through Massowah under British protection. This was a preferable alternative to the original wish of the king to possess the port of Massowah, for, as was explained to him, he would be unable to hold it against any enemy possessing a single gunboat.

For a very short time after the conclusion of the treaty, matters looked as if they had settled down quietly, until, in 1885, Italy occupied Massowah, promising, however, to undertake England's obligations under the Hewett treaty. Abyssinia did not

regard Italian protection as at all the same thing as British protection, and dissensions arose between Italy and Abyssinia. Simultaneously with the early stages of these dissensions King John completed the release of the Egyptian garrisons, and so great was the satisfaction of the British Government with the manner in which he had carried out his side of the treaty that it was decided to present him, his son, and his chief general, with swords of honour as presents from Her Majesty the Queen.

On the 17th of December, 1885, therefore, I had the honour of receiving a letter from the Marquis of Salisbury, informing me that I had been selected to proceed to Abyssinia as the bearer of a letter from the Queen to King John, and of the sword of honour. I was directed to proceed to Cairo to make the necessary preparations for my journey, and my instructions stated that it was desired that I should, if possible, reach Massowah in time to accompany an Italian mission destined to start from thence to Abyssinia towards the end of January, 1886; but that



THE QUEEN'S SWORD OF HONOUR.

if this should not be practicable, I should arrange to take the sword and letter to the king by myself. In a further letter I was directed, while not taking any active part in the negotiations between the Italian mission and King John, to facilitate an understanding, and to do what was in my power to explain any matters in which the king might be under the impression that he had cause of complaint. In the Queen's letter it was stated that the sword of honour was not, at the moment of writing, completed, but that as soon as it should be so, it would be sent. Some few days later, Lord Salisbury wrote that the sword was completed, and, with other presents, was sent in my charge, because I was already known to the king from having accompanied Admiral Hewett when he visited Abyssinia in the previous year. An incident arose out of these two letters which, as it gave me no little trouble, and placed me in a position of some danger, I will relate in its proper place.

II.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE EXPEDITION. JOURNEY FROM LONDON TO CAIRO.

II.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE EXPEDITION. JOURNEY FROM LONDON TO CAIRO.

BEFORE one has been many weeks in any one of Her Majesty's services, one becomes aware of the existence of some drag or skid, which appears to retard the circulation of the wheels of official machinery. "Why don't we build more ships?" laments one. "Because the Treasury won't allow the money," is the reply. This impediment, then, to the free and unrestricted use of the sinews of war is the Treasury, the custodian of the public purse. No doubt that is exactly as it should be, otherwise Lord High Admiral Hobbyhorse would be squandering thousands on building ships to his own design, while the overburdened taxpayer would groan inwardly, and would outwardly grow thin and seedy at the knees and elbows. It was with some little misgivings, then, that I

was told at the Foreign Office that the Treasury sanction had not yet been received to the estimate for the expenses of my mission, and as one day after another slipped by, as days will when one doesn't want them to hurry, I began to fear that the needful sanction might even yet be withheld. My fears, however, proved to be groundless, for after a few hastening minutes from the Foreign Office to the Treasury, the modest sum of £750 was placed at my disposal, in the shape of a book of blank bills on the credit of my paternal government. I recall the fact that that was on a Tuesday afternoon, and as I wanted to leave London for Cairo with the Indian mails on the following Friday evening, I had not very much time to collect my wits and other necessaries for such a journey as I was about to undertake. "Where there's a will there's a way," and in this case there was a great deal of will, for who, at the ardent age of twenty-four, would not rejoice at the thoughts of such a journey, and of such responsibility as the trust of a mission involved. Even the still vivid recol-

lections of the weary hours of riding, and the discomforts and dangers of my journey over the same ground in the previous year, could not deter me, in spite of the fact that I found myself called on to undergo alone the monotony and unpleasantness which I had previously shared with twenty or more companions of my own race and colour. While waiting the pleasure of the Treasury, however, I had been jotting down numerous articles of camp and personal equipment which I should require, so on that same Tuesday afternoon I was able to spend a few agreeable hours in that very agreeable occupation of buying things. I had good reason to be fairly well satisfied with my afternoon's work, when I came to put it to the test some weeks later, for during the whole of my journey I only had to regret the omission of some two or three articles. Being a naval officer, and a non-combatant at that, I was not provided with any of the articles of a military man's kit, which enable him to take service in the field at a moment's notice. I therefore found myself buying such articles

as a kit-bag, constructed to contain goodness knows what, but nearly everything except one's horse and personal attendants, it seemed. At all events, when I saw it strapped up, and tilted my tall hat off my bedewed brow at the end of the afternoon to take breath, that bag certainly contained a camp-bed, bath, basin, water-bottle, two blankets, air pillow, gun in case, sword, looking-glass, a bulky despatch-case, meteorological instruments of all sorts, a marvellous kitchener, which in itself contained kettles, tin-plates, frying-pans, spirit lamps, a charcoal grate, a multitude of spice-boxes, and numerous other culinary utensils. But to return to the bag ; in it were stuffed books of every description, a great coat and many articles of clothing, such as Baltic shirts, Cardigan waistcoats, and I was going to say a saddle, with bridles, holsters, and other appurtenances, but when I come to tax my own veracity, I fancy that these latter had a box which they shared with a capacious lunch-basket fitted for three, for of course others might join my mission at the last moment, and if they didn't,

I should be in a position to dispense British hospitality to two of my Italian colleagues. How, during those three days of buying and packing, I managed to remember so much and omit so little, afterwards seemed rather wonderful to myself: for I had, not only to buy things and put them haphazard into boxes, but to arrange that the articles which I should require at the various progressive stages of my journey should be forthcoming at the right moment. Close to my bed I kept a candle and box of matches, and when anything crossed my mind I forthwith struck a light and committed it to paper. As I did a good deal of thinking during the dark hours of those rather exciting days, I was obliged to interrupt my rest very frequently. Friday night found me with all my goods packed; some to accompany me across the Continent, either in the carriage, or registered through to Brindisi, while all my heavier gear went round by sea to Suez. I was not a little tired as I stood on the deck of the steamer at Dover, watching the avalanche of luggage rushing down the inclined

shoot from the Admiralty pier to the deck. There were elephantine trunks chasing wretched little hat-boxes, until one thought that complete destruction must await the more fragile competitor at the goal-post; but when that result seemed inevitable, a dexterous hand would seize the light article and whip it swiftly out of the reach of its more robust pursuer. The channel passage on a cold December night is not the sort of seafaring experience one would choose for pastime, and I have indeed known men for whom the mountainous seas of the roaring forties had no terrors, but whom the motion of the silver streak laid out like schoolgirls. However, after a fairly fine run Calais was reached. When one came under the blaze of the electric light there, one had an opportunity of scanning one's fellows as they filed, baggage in hand, across the narrow gangway. One man of tremendous personal bulk, and laden with enough light luggage to cause me to pray that he was not to be one of my companions in the sleeping-car, jambed fast in the gangway, immediately in front of me.

Another fellow-passenger behind me remarked, in an irritated stage whisper, "That fellow's as big as Mont Cenis," to which I could only sigh in reply, "Yes, but unfortunately without the tunnel through him." After the usual haggle with the conductor of the *wagon lit* as to who had engaged berths and who had not, we got away by train. Four of us shook down into a corresponding number of berths in one compartment, and my memory is so far at fault as to the proceedings of the next few hours that I can only describe my existence as a series of snorts (human and locomotive) and jerks. At what intervals these occurrences took place I am unable to say, but when daylight again illumined the scene we were rushing through a flat, snow-covered country. Then followed a wriggling out of bed and into various articles of clothing, a little steeplechasing along a narrow passage over flights of open Gladstone bags, and a brief and unsatisfactory dabble in a pint of icy cold water rapidly gyrating around the sides of a metal basin, as if to keep itself warm. *Dix minuits*

d'arrêt gave one a chance of a very welcome but somewhat hurried breakfast, and a good stamp up and down a platform to set the blood circulating through one's perished feet. Cooped up in fours on the International Car Company's system, one is pretty much at the mercy of one's companions, and in this instance I was fortunate. The army was represented in the person of an officer whose arm was still *hors de combat* from a wound received up the Nile, and who was on his way out to join the Egyptian army; the Navy in myself; the Indian Civil Service in a third; and civil life in a fourth. We whiled away the day with cards, reading, smoking, eating, and gazing at the scenery as it seemed to rush by us with a circular motion like that of the bits of glass in a penny kaleidoscope. A moonlight night showed us the declivities from which we had risen as the train emerged at intervals from the Mont Cenis tunnels; but beautiful though it may have been—was, I mean—a glass of whiskey and another night of snorts, screams, and jerks was voted more entertaining than the contemplation of a

series of not very well lighted-up gorges and ravines. The fact of the matter was that I, at least, was in a hurry to get on, and we and the time seemed to slip along more rapidly in sleep than otherwise. I so feared that something might happen to bring about my recall, and I could not bear to contemplate the possibility of so dire a disappointment. It was something to have a mission to carry out all to one's self, and I was desirous of acquitting myself honourably, and felt that the consciousness of my power to do so would be but a poor satisfaction to me should the opportunity be snatched from me. On the following morning, after another wriggle, steeplechase, and dabble, we arrived at Bologna. We breakfasted on the native sausage and changed our International car for one on the Pullman system. In point of comfort, I consider that the former is not to be compared with the latter, but our little quartette, consolidated by the close companionship of thirty-six hours' acquaintance was broken up, somewhat to our mutual regret, and we became merged in an ex-

tended society, numbering in all sixteen. Beyond the bursting of the pressure-pipe of the brake, nothing of event occurred to disturb the even tenor of the day, or the uneven tenor of the Italian railway line. We were all travellers of some standing, and so, though I had never before travelled on the Continent, I was able to contain the surprise and amusement which the strangely-attired railway and police officials excited in the innermost recesses of my mind. I suppose the British bobby strikes the intelligent foreigner as a curious specimen of our national officialdom ; but, though I may be prejudiced, he seems to me to possess at least the merit of solidity, and an appearance of respect-inspiring strength. Such being the case, I suppose one cannot expect to have everything, and therefore one must forego, with more or less willingness, the consequentiality and general air of struttiness which seem to be the predominant characteristics of the little beings in baggy blue breeches, silver lace, and plumes, who clank their ponderous sabres at the station doors.

The Pullman system enables one to snatch an afternoon nap on the upper tier of berths without interfering with the rubber of whist going on in the seats and at the tables below; and as we are to be disturbed about midnight to transfer ourselves and baggage to the steamer at Brindisi, not a few of us avail ourselves of the opportunity. We poor Britons had evidently been greatly imposed on in some unascertained respects, for about midday a native gentleman joined our party, and from the time he did so, until he went to sleep some three hours later, he was engaged in a wordy war of reformation with the conductor. The strife was carried on at such a terrific pace, and with such gesticulatory emphasis, that we hardly knew whether to admire more, the volubility evinced by the disputants, or the marvellous tenacity of their limbs to their trunks, for truly had any windmill indulged in such violent exercise, centrifugal force would have instantly dismembered it. However, the newcomer was but of human flesh, and eventually went to sleep, leaving us in blissful

ignorance of the shortcomings of the conductor which had been the cause of his tirade. We reached Brindisi about an hour after midnight, and I lost no time in getting on board the *Mongolia* and into my berth, where I made up for the lack of sleep experienced on the two previous nights spent on the railway. Three bright Mediterranean days slipped away on the passage to Alexandria quickly enough. What with drawing up plans for my journey, studying blue-books and the accounts of former travellers on the subject of the Abyssinian question, a perusal of Gordon's journals, and Mayne's essays on "Popular Government," I filled up the usually idle time of a passenger's life pleasantly enough. Amongst my fellow-voyagers was Canon Liddon. My previous knowledge of the eminent divine was confined to a forty-five minutes' sermon at St. Paul's some years previously. I have since heard that forty-five minutes is not long for a sermon, but I recollect that it tried my youthful impatience sadly, and it would be hard to decide whether the seat of my chair

or that of my trousers was the more reduced by the fidgety wriggling which I kept up for probably two-thirds of the time. At daylight on the 24th of December, the *Mongolia* arrived at Alexandria. After much hubbub with the cabmen on landing, we started for the station in batches, and by ten o'clock were again off by train for Cairo. The day was warm, the carriage full, and for five hours we dawdled along, as foreign trains can and do dawdle, till we reached Cairo. Much discussion took place as to the merits of the various hotels, but all the old hands insisted on Shepheard's on all accounts, and so, guided by their experience, to Shepheard's I went. A description of Cairo and of Cairo life would be out of place here, and though much will occur in the course of my narrative to give my readers an idea of the place as I saw it, I shall not attempt to describe what has been so often and ably portrayed by pen and pencil during recent years. After depositing my light luggage in my room, I went to the Chancellerie to leave my despatches and to report my arrival to the *chargé*

d'affaires, in the absence of the minister and consul-general. A stroll about Cairo passed away the time pleasantly until dinner. A large party of English visitors assembled at *table d'hôte* that Christmas Eve. Having no friends, I had an opportunity of taking stock of my surroundings. The dining-room looked more like a military mess-room than that of an hotel, owing to the order that officers were always to wear uniform while stationed in Egypt. The masculine appearance of a mess-room was modified, however, by the presence of many ladies, either winter visitors or relatives of officers stationed in the garrison. On the following day I had a number of official visits to pay, chief amongst them being one to Sir Henry Drummond Wolff, Her Majesty's High Commissioner. He was waiting for the arrival of the great Ghazi Moukhtar Pasha, who had been so long coming, but whose arrival never seemed the nearer in spite of the lapse of days and weeks. However, on Sunday morning, two days after my arrival, the news reached us

that the Turkish yacht had arrived in Alexandria harbour, and that the Pasha would arrive in state, in Cairo, the same day. The procession past the hotel brought out on to its spacious verandah all the visitors, and was indeed a somewhat impressive sight. British and Egyptian cavalry and infantry combined to swell the pomp. The hero of the hour was accompanied by all the diplomatic and military functionaries of high degree, amongst them being his old companion in arms, General Baker Pasha. A bystander, who probably had had considerable experience of Turkish officials and their manner of conducting business, prophesied that long as Moukhtar had taken to arrive, it would be longer still before he would be induced to depart. If my recollection of the progress of succeeding events is correct, this prediction was well verified.

When I left London, I knew that I should be obliged to remain at least a week in Cairo to await some further instructions and the arrival of the swords for the king and his son, and presents for other chiefs, but I con-

sidered that this would give me not any too much time to obtain my camp and transport equipment, and therefore I hastened on in order that I might be ready for a start as soon as my work should be cut out for me. My mission, however, began to grow in my hands, and involved frequent interviews with various diplomatic officials in Cairo. Besides this, the work of estimating for my requirements, in the matter of equipment and provisions, occupied considerable time, and entailed no little labour. Without this, the enforced idleness would have caused the time to hang heavily on my hands. As it was, I had enough work to keep the devil out of my mind, and some time to spare for my own amusement. I had taken the precaution, while in London, of requesting that the military authorities in Cairo might be authorized to comply with all my requests for the supply of stores, and I therefore proceeded to the headquarters, and having been put into the way of obtaining what I wanted, I lodged the requisite papers, and overlooked the packing of the various

articles, learning their uses, when I did not already know them. The supplies drawn from this source comprised a very miscellaneous collection of goods, of which some of the most important were four Indian mountain tents, which I knew to be handy, easily pitched and struck, very efficient against sun and weather, and about the most comfortable form of house, in so small a space, that it is possible to conceive. My further experience only confirmed me in this opinion, and to any one who has not arrived at a conclusion from his own experience, and who may be wanting a serviceable tent for all contingencies, I can strongly recommend a trial of this pattern. Made of light Indian cotton, and with bamboo supports, it weighs only 120 lbs., and is very portable therefore. The Abyssinian mule is a small animal, but constantly carried two complete tents, provided they were fairly dry, and this up and down steep mountain sides, over rugged rocky paths, for weeks together. I also provided myself with about twenty-five of the army pattern pack-saddles, and though I

should have preferred a smaller size for the beasts who had to carry them, yet I found that they were well adapted to the rough and heavy work which was afterwards required of them. Some water-tanks for camel transport, but which mules carried easily enough half-filled, were also taken; waterproof sheets, picketing poles and ropes, nose-bags, and many other indispensable articles. Then, besides a quantity of provisions which I was obliged to buy, I drew from the commissariat stores such articles as tea, coffee, sugar, field rations, and tinned meats, because, although I knew that on my previous journey in Abyssinia supplies of every kind had been obtainable, I could not be sure that my route would be through districts where the natives might be so hospitably inclined; and, in addition to this, the Italian occupation of Massowah was likely to have so changed the feelings of the natives from favourable to unfavourable, that it was quite possible that I should be regarded as an enemy during the entire course of my journey to the king, and, in the event of my

mission failing, on the return journey as well.

I have said that in collecting my equipment and in planning my journey I found sufficient to occupy me some hours daily, but I had plenty of leisure for recreation. This latter I spent in visiting the various quarters of the town, in riding, an occasional cricket match, or in watching the polo. On two occasions I was unfortunate in my equestrian experiences. I had undertaken to escort a lady for a ride, on behalf of a friend who had been unable to fulfil his engagement at the last moment. He therefore mounted me on a horse which had been raced a good deal, and was in fact *the* steeplechaser of the place. Quiet enough by himself, my horse was stirred into a spirit of competition by my companion's pony trotting alongside, and oblivious of the fact that I was doing my utmost to hold him, and that we were still in the streets of Cairo and not on the Gezireh, he dashed off through the crowded street. For some moments I managed to avoid a collision, but a frightened

woman, carrying a baby in her arms and a basket of oranges on her head, ran first towards one side of the road and then back, rendering it quite impossible for me to keep clear of her. As I sailed by, the toe of my boot touched her back, but not with any force. My proximity, however, was too much for her, and she dropped the baby to save the oranges. My lady competitor being now well out of the race, I was able to pull up and turn back to examine the extent of the mischief, which I was relieved to find was not serious. As usual on such occasions, there was much excitement, which manifested itself in the shouting and gesticulations of the crowd, and the bold gendarmes of the place promptly laid hands on my bridle with a view of marching me, horse and all, into custody. Foreseeing the endless and unnecessary bother which a compliance with the demands of the police would entail, I shook myself free of them and the crowd, and continued my ride in search of my missing companion, whom I eventually tracked to her tea-table. On another occasion I accompanied the

troops on a field day at the Pyramids. I ordered a horse from the French riding-school, and warned the proprietor of the purpose for which I required it. I was emphatically assured that I should be provided with an animal accustomed, as its owner put it, to "music and the cannon." A good-looking jet-black arrived, and having stowed away flasks and luncheon in our holsters, a friend and myself mounted our respective steeds. The quiet behaviour of my animal considerably astonished me at first, as it was so much opposed to the impression which his wicked eye made on others as well as myself. Before crossing the Nile, I had occasion to go into the yard of the Kasr-el-Nil Barracks to make some request regarding the stores being collected there for me. Here I first received a hint of what was coming, and directly I was clear outside, and had turned my nag's head toward the bridge, he gave a succession of short, quick bucks and dashed off, describing vigorous circles with his tail, for all the world like the track of a revolving and advancing comet. But for the

warning in the barrack-yard, the preliminary bucks would have unseated me, and left my horse to pursue his meteoric course unaccompanied. After a rush of half a mile or so along the wrong road, I managed to pull him in, and retrace my path till I reached a turning which I had desired to take soon after clearing the bridge, but which it will be readily understood I had missed in the first instance. The entire journey to the Pyramids was a series of advances by short quick rushes, relieved by brief intervals of quiet, but always heralded by the preliminary bucks. The fatigue engendered by these proceedings abated my appreciation of the Pyramids, the largest of which I was only too glad to use as a rest for my back while I consumed the contents of my flask and sandwich-case. Anticipating even more energetic behaviour on the part of my steed on the return journey, I decided to start before the troops, in order to have as clear a road as possible. After about two rushes, I overtook an officer riding slowly back, unwell. While I was content to walk and

converse with him, relating the vagaries of my horse, we jogged along quietly enough, but on endeavouring to force our horses into a trot, mine gave practical illustration to my narrative. At intervals I was able to enjoy the society of my friend, who finally advised me, as my saddle was a valuable one, to take it off when we reached the river, and push the horse over the bridge,—a course which I should then have willingly adopted had the horse been my property. No doubt my seat profited in firmness by this exercise, but the exercise itself was not pleasant. My complaint at the stables was met by the advice, given all too late, "*Ne touchez pas les jambes, laissez les mains.*" What the result of adopting such advice would have been I cannot of course say, but, judging from my hardly acquired experience, I should imagine that I should have been either left, at the outset, on the flat of my back on the bridge, or found myself at Khartoum long before the Soudan would have been quiet enough to admit of my proceeding with safety beyond Wady Halfa. A loose seat seemed but a poor

preventive against the displacement which might follow a sudden buck on the part of one's steed, and a slack rein quite inadequate to restrain the impetuous career of a bolting brute such as I had ridden. From a spectator's point of view the effect had been stirring, I afterwards learned, and in the compliments paid to my sticking powers, my fatigued body and mind found some little solace.

After rather more than a fortnight in Cairo, and when I was beginning to find my time hanging somewhat heavily, I determined to take a few days' run to Alexandria. My journey was necessary also, as I wished to match a specimen cartridge, in order to take a supply of the same to the King of Abyssinia, who had sent the specimen to England with a request to that effect. I had searched Cairo thoroughly in my quest, but had been unable even to ascertain the description of the rifle to which it belonged. So, one Sunday evening I left by the mail train, which afforded perfectly reasonable travelling, in great contrast to the ordinary slow train by

which I had reached Cairo from Alexandria. I put up at the Hotel Khedivial, which I found very comfortable. My search for cartridges took me over nearly the whole of Alexandria, and indeed well into the suburbs, for there was living in a tent on the beach beyond Ramleh an elderly naval man, who had acquired for himself a reputation as a mighty hunter. He was thus possessed of many varieties of fire-arm, and stories of his recent exploits in Abyssinia, which reached me, also increased my desire for an interview. After one or two ineffectual endeavours, I at last found him at home in his tent. As to the cartridge, he was unable to say to what rifle my specimen belonged, so we passed in succession to other subjects of mutual interest. The old fellow could say nothing bad enough for Abyssinia and its people; on many points of the national character I was unable to dispute the truth of his views, but they had a lack of originality about them, and I therefore questioned him as to his sporting experiences in the country. His accounts of the large game, elephants, lions, &c., with which the

country teemed, made me congratulate myself on having escaped with my life on my last journey, and I trembled for my safety in the future. My friend was also very communicative on the subject of his revolution in the manner of pitching tents. His plans certainly had the merit of rapidity, but I called to mind certain shapeless heaps of canvas and sticks which, on one of my futile searches for him, had been pointed out to me as his tents, and I mentally decided to prefer driving in a few more pegs when pitching my tent, to extricating myself from a collapsed and soaking shroud of canvas at intervals during any stormy night which it might be my lot to encounter. A great revolution in pistols was also absorbing the mind of the gallant ex-captain, the details of which I will not divulge as they may by now be protected by royal letters patent. My visit to this hermit afterwards received additional interest from further particulars as to his Abyssinian exploits which I learned at Massowah, but which, to conclude my story, may be related here. His journey towards Abyssinia had

extended to a few yards beyond Monkullu, which is an outlying fort some four miles from Massowah. Here, under the protection of a formidable body of Italian infantry and artillery, he had shot at several pariah dogs; but because either the Italian or the Abyssinian would not permit him to proceed into the interior, he had returned to the coast and embarked for Egypt, presumably without having satisfied his sporting instincts to the extent which his narrative led one to suppose must have been his desire. He was an imaginative old gentleman, but his stories and their sequels reminded me of the contents of the blue and white packets of the Seidlitz powder, as they required to be taken together to make their virtues apparent.

During the few days spent at Alexandria, I visited the "*Orion*," and met a few of my naval friends, by whom I was introduced to several of the residents; and to any one conversant with Alexandrian society at this time, it will be needless to add that I experienced as much hospitality as could be well crowded into a flying visit.

On my return to Cairo, I found all my camp and transport equipment packed in large cases ready for shipment, and I therefore despatched it to Suez. Before leaving Cairo I obtained an interview with the Coptic patriarch, on whom devolves the appointment of an Aboona, or High Priest, to Abyssinia. The withholding of an Aboona by Egypt was for some years one of the many causes of disagreement between that country and Abyssinia, because, by the religious laws of the latter, a Coptic Aboona was the only person who could ordain priests. The patriarch entrusted me with a few messages for the Aboona, and I took my leave after a very satisfactory interview. Just before midnight I completed my packing and went to bed, ready for a start on the morrow. A visit to a dentist brought my stay in Cairo to a close, and I hastened off to the station just in time to catch the train for Suez.

III.

SUEZ, SUAKIN, AND MASSOWAH.

III.

SUEZ, SUAKIN, AND MASSOWAH.

THE only available compartment in the train was already occupied by a monkey, chained to the window-sash with a tether long enough to enable him to roam the length and breadth of the compartment at his own, anything but sweet will. As a companion, I found him so objectionable before starting that I had him removed. In the train were a number of English soldiers going to Ismailia or Suez to join a homeward-bound troopship. As we steamed out of the station at Tel-el-Kebir, close to the little cemetery which contains the bodies of our countrymen who fell there in 1882, the troops gave their fallen comrades a few ringing cheers, which were borne away over the surrounding desert just as were the cheers of the boys who stormed the trenches

on that dawning September morn, when, having passed the hail of Egyptian bullets, they rushed the intrenchments, and threw themselves at the Egyptian guns and bayonet points. After as dreary a day's railway journey as can be well conceived, the train arrived at Suez at half-past seven in the evening. The choice of quarters is limited, and I therefore put up at the Suez hotel, where a dinner of soup and sago-pudding was all I could obtain to restore my wasted vigour. I spent the next day getting my stores on board the *Iona*. The docks are reached by traversing a neck of land along which the railway is laid; but unless one happens to just catch a train, it is better to take a donkey. In the evening I dined with the Eastern Telegraph Company's well-known superintendent, and after dinner repaired with my host and his wife to the Consulate, for whist. The one respect in which I did not feel that my arrangements were fairly complete was that of money. The only coin which passes current in Abyssinia is the Maria Theresa dollar of 1780, of which

many thousands are coined annually for use in that country. The natives scrutinize most closely every dollar tendered, and will reject it if they suspect its genuineness. They are careful to see that the coin is neither too new nor too old; that it bears the letters SF. under the head; that there are eight dots, or "mustard seeds," on the coronet; that the brooch or "moon" is not worn away; and that the lettering round the rim is not defaced. It follows, therefore, that in providing oneself with money for the journey it is necessary to pick the coins carefully, and as I could not be sure of obtaining sufficient at Suakin or Massowah, I proclaimed my desire to buy some in Suez. With the assistance of the pro-consul I soon obtained as many as I required, all of which I had carefully selected, for I knew the continued refusals of the natives to accept certain coins to be a cause of constant annoyance, though I had always made a practice of putting away rejected dollars in a separate bag, from which I drew my supplies when it became necessary to bestow a money present on a

chief. My treasury consisted of two boxes, made so that I could slide part of the lid out without removing the straps by which the boxes would hang on the pack-saddle, and this plan of packing I adopted with all my stores. My goods having been shipped on board the *Iona*, it became necessary to send another vessel, the *Romeo*, instead. The exchange was a good one, and as none of the trouble of transferring the cargo fell on me, I had nothing to do but be thankful. On the day on which I had arranged to sail from Suez I received a telegram from England, stating that some cartridges, for which I had already waited some time, would not arrive till much later than I had at first expected. It was useless, under these circumstances, for me to arrive at Massowah so early as I had intended; but as I did not wish to lose sight of all my gear, and could not at the last moment remove it from the ship, and as it appeared unlikely that I should again get so comfortable a vessel as the *Romeo*, I decided to proceed to Suakin and spend some time there, during which I expected

to benefit by learning the latest news of Massowah and Abyssinia from the consul and others. The *Romeo* belonged to the Hull and Norway trade, and though not designed for running in a latitude so hot as that of the Red Sea, she was certainly comfortable. There were only nine passengers in the saloon, including one lady with her husband who was a medical officer, the lieutenant-colonel of the Shropshire regiment, a captain in the Commissariat and Transport corps, who was returning from sick leave when he apparently should have been starting on it, a Roman Catholic chaplain, the Italian consul, and one or two more. The consul told me that he had travelled much, and had been in Khartoum with General Gordon at one time.

We sailed from Suez on the evening of the 22nd of January, and had lovely weather, the temperature being so well balanced that it was impossible to say whether it were warm or cool Not so, however, on the 24th, for though the thermometer registered only 80° it was very muggy and un-

comfortable, and I thought that I had never felt the heat in the same way, although not many months previously I had returned from a long tour of about seven years' foreign service, most of which had been spent in the East and West Indies, where 80° was looked upon as comparatively cool. On the 25th we arrived at Suakin, which was very much changed in appearance since the early days of my acquaintance with it in December, 1883. The quarantine island, then a perfect desert, was now built over with huts, tents, storehouses, and a railway terminus. The island of Suakin proper was not much changed, but along the promontory which forms the southern shore of the harbour were huts and hospitals for the troops, while the mainland was covered by the camp of the Indian troops, who still remained to garrison the place.

On landing I met Brewster Bey, the sub-governor of the town and the Director of Customs, whom I had known well in 1883 and 1884, and who had then rendered my chief, Sir William Hewett, services which were of the utmost value at a time when we

were dependent on the few residents who could be trusted, for the benefit of their local experience. Brewster Bey most hospitably took me in, and allowed all my stores and baggage to be deposited in the Custom House, where it formed a goodly stack. During a stay of about eighteen days at Suakin, I was able to improve my arrangements considerably, by having recourse to the ordnance stores. A morning and evening ride were my usual amusements, but in addition to these I had the good fortune to witness a race meeting, and to play in a cricket match. There was usually a gathering at the hotel of an evening, and to the music of an orguinette we danced, on one occasion. The heat during the day gave me ample opportunities for indoor study of the various routes which former travellers had taken, and to this previous preparation a great deal of the success of my own marches, subsequently, was due. Early in February an Austrian steamer came in, on her way to Massowah, and I engaged a passage, but as she sailed a day before her advertised time,

I missed my passage. I had heard her whistling, but as she was not flying the "blue-peter," I supposed that she was calling for lighters. On that same morning I had a grand spill at a water jump, when galloping round the steeplechase course with a friend. His horse refused to jump and swerved across the hedge, with the result that I came violently into collision just at the moment when my horse should have taken off. I therefore had the pleasure of flying over *two* horses' heads and alighted on my feet in the ditch, having performed a somersault and managed to turn myself round so as to face the animal from whose back I had so recently dismounted, and who was looking wonderingly over the hedge at me. My companion was much surprised and relieved to see me unhurt, for beyond a few very slight scratches I was not touched, and, having mounted, we continued our gallop, I having added another item to my equestrian experiences.

The chartered transport *Geelong* arrived on the following day, with Sir Charles Warren,

the newly appointed Governor-General. She was under orders to proceed shortly to Aden, so I obtained permission for her to call at Massowah on the way, in order to land me. On the 12th of February we sailed from Suakin, and I greatly enjoyed the clean comfort of the vessel at sea after the intolerable odours of the town. We arrived at Massowah on the following day, and I landed at once, my goods being transferred to lighters and brought ashore as quickly as possible in order to allow the *Geelong* to proceed on her voyage. The Italian naval officer who had boarded the steamer, conducted me to the house where General Pozzolini, the head of the Italian Mission, and his officers were living. I was received with great courtesy, and a room was allotted to me out of the very limited accommodation at the general's disposal. I found that the members of the mission comprised Signor Bardi, of the Foreign Office, Dr. Nerrazini and Lieutenant Bonnefoi, both of the Italian Navy, and Lieutenant Capacchi, of the Artillery, and these were to be my companions on the

journey into the interior. As the result of a correspondence between the Foreign Office in London and the Italian Minister, the hospitality of Italy had been accepted on my behalf during my stay in Massowah. The Italian Government had desired to extend to me their hospitality for the whole journey, but the Marquis of Salisbury, considering that confusion might ensue in the Abyssinian mind if the two missions, which were for different objects, were not kept distinct, and because my work would probably occupy less time than that of the Italian Mission, limited his acceptance of this offer to the period of my stay in Massowah. As I was unable to speak Italian, I was glad to find that Bonnefoi spoke English so perfectly that he might pass easily as an Englishman, of which he also had every appearance of being. He therefore took me under his wing, and during the whole time of my acquaintance with him was unvarying in his kindness.

After a very cordial exchange of formalities with General Pozzolini and his staff, I was conducted to the palace occupied by General

Géné, the Commandant of the troops and Governor of the town and its environs. General Géné repeated, in the name of his government, their offer of hospitality, and desired to do everything possible to assist me in my duties, and to make me comfortable to the full extent of his power. As it would be impossible to relate the many acts of kindness which I received at the hands of all the Italian officers whom I met during a prolonged stay amongst them, I must content myself with saying that they far exceeded their promises in every way.

While in Cairo, I had engaged as my personal servant a certain Mahomed Edrice, and I decided that he should be the only Mussulman in my caravan. On my previous journey the caravan had consisted of Mussulman Arabs and Abyssinian Christians, in the proportion of one half, and though they settled down to work together fairly well in the end, there was no little dissension at times. For instance, it occasionally happened that a Mussulman mule-driver would fall sick, and a Christian would be ordered to drive the

former's mule. A wrangle would ensue between the Christian and the headman through whom the order had been passed. With the assistance of an interpreter the matter would be investigated, when it would be discovered that the Christian objected because the mule was a "*Mahometan mule*" by virtue of its having previously been driven by a Mussulman. In addition to little difficulties such as this, it was found that the bigotry of the Abyssinians scarcely tolerated the sojurn in their country of a body of Mahometans. At Suakin I engaged the services of a young Abyssinian named Kassa, who had accompanied us through the country in 1884, and had become a general favourite on account of his cheerful willingness to work, his keenness as a sportsman, and his general intelligence. On our return to the coast he had been taken on board ship, where he remained studying English with two other small Abyssinian boys, until he was qualified as an interpreter. This position he was holding on board a gun vessel when I secured his services. Immediately on my arrival at

Massowah I engaged my head interpreter named Bru. Now an old man, Bru was educated at the English Protestant College in Malta, whither he had been taken by Antoine d'Abbadie, to whom his uncle had taught Amharic, as the principal Abyssinian dialect is called. From 1858 to 1860 he worked in the telegraph department of the Egyptian railway, at that time managed by Englishmen. He then served the Red Sea and Indian Telegraph Company until Sir Robert Napier's expedition into Abyssinia in 1867, when he was employed at first with the cavalry, and subsequently with a surveying party of Royal Engineers. Since then he has accompanied many official and sporting expeditions into the country, including that of Sir William Hewett. Being well connected, he has considerable influence to add to his valuable experience, and since he speaks both dialects of Abyssinian, English, Arabic, French, and Armenian, he is a useful man to secure. With these three men as my staff, I set to work to form my caravan.

From Cairo I had telegraphed to a well-

known merchant of Massowah to obtain for me about thirty good mules at a fixed price which made it worth his while to procure good animals, and though I paid slightly more than I should have done had I bought my animals one by one by bargaining, I secured my money's worth many times over in other ways. On the day after my arrival at Massowah I went out shooting with the two generals and a few officers, and on my return I unpacked all my saddlery and stacked it conveniently for use. I engaged about twenty-five Abyssinians as drivers, on wages of three dollars a month, and I devoted some time during that and the next few days to teaching them how to pitch tents, strap up cases, and many other duties with which it was necessary they should become familiar to enable me to keep my caravan in good order single-handed. I laid down picketing lines, with head and heel ropes, so that when my mules arrived I examined them, and, if accepted, I moored them head and stern, so to speak, in their places along the lines. This process was not got through either so

quickly or easily as is that of writing about it. The animals, unused to discipline, struggled and kicked furiously, under which circumstances it was a work of art to confine their heels in the leather straps of the heel ropes. My men evinced a decided distaste for the job at first, and it was only by setting them a personal example that they eventually took to it quietly, and induced the animals to do the same. I used to drill them twice daily at taking the mules out to water, half the men performing this service while the other half cleared up the lines, laid down fresh gravel, and prepared the forage, so that when the mules arrived back they were picketed, fed and cleaned. Under these circumstances they began to look very well in a few days, and my courtyard, with the animals drawn up in straight lines and having the appearance of being well cared for, was much admired, and most favourably criticised, by many competent Italian officers. I refer to this with some pride as I had naturally had but very little training in such a matter. Indeed the contrast between my own mules and those

being collected for the Italian Mission was so marked as to lead the officers of the mission to take a leaf out of my book, for their animals were tied to various posts by ropes round their necks ; consequently, as they followed each other round and round the posts, their tethers became shortened until they were almost inextricably tangled in a mass, and in danger of being strangled in their struggles to free themselves from their ropes and the heap of mire which had been allowed to collect around them. The next thing requisite was to fit each mule with his own saddle, as the animals varied considerably in size. This was another operation not quietly submitted to, but by degrees I worked through the whole of them, and charged each man with the care of a mule with all its saddlery, harness, and other belongings such as nose-bags, currycombs, and brushes. A man to a mule may seem rather a generous arrangement, but it is difficult for less than two men to load a mule, and so I worked them in pairs. The roughness of the country, too, necessitates a strong party of drivers if one

is to keep a caravan, equipped in European fashion, in proper order, and avoid the sore backs which are so terribly common among the beasts of burden in Abyssinia. Then came the difficulty of weighing out the loads, and allotting various weights to certain mules. Many of my packages were unsuitable in dimensions and weight, and had to be re-packed. The assistance rendered me by some of my men was at first of most doubtful value, and except that I had particularly determined not to be driven crazy, I am sure that such would have been my fate in a very short time.

Towards the end of February, I had so far completed my arrangements as to be able to march my caravan out for a trial trip. This developed a few defects which I immediately put to rights. But it must not be supposed that I had nothing else to do but play with my men and mules, though indeed that was hard enough work in a broiling tropical sun. Some hours daily were spent in discussing with the Italian General the policy of the coming mission, and the steps to be taken at certain

junctures, or on certain possible contingencies arising. I also visited the various naval and military establishments at Massowah, and got through no little official letter-writing, which I generally worked at during the night. I had improvised a fairly comfortable writing-desk in my room, out of one of the huge packing-cases which had contained my saddles. This I placed with one side on the floor, so that the opposite side formed the top, and I sat with my legs inside the case; covered with an indiarubber sheet, this compared favourably with most of the furniture of which the establishment boasted, for the Italian officers were roughing it thoroughly.

On one's interpreter much of the success of such a mission as I had undertaken depends, and on that account I had been glad to secure old Bru's services. I had suspected certain passages in the translation of a letter from the king of Abyssinia to Queen Victoria when the letter was shown to me in England. At Massowah, an interpreter in the employ of the Italians told me that while in Cairo he had translated a letter which I knew to be

LETTER FROM KING JOHN OF ABYSSINIA TO QUEEN VICTORIA.

the one which I had seen in London, and I at once taxed him with the inaccuracies. He, of course, upheld his work, but some months later, when I met him again, he confessed, what I had pretty well assured myself of by that time, that his false translations had been part of an intrigue. His propensity for intrigue might have been fraught with disastrous consequences to his employers, but for a fortunate chance which turned the tables on himself. When out for our morning ride on one occasion, we met an Abyssinian messenger who delivered to the interpreter two letters, one of which the latter gave to the General, the other he put into his own pocket. On being asked why he was corresponding with the interior when in the employ of Italy, the interpreter became insolent and said that the letter was from a private friend of his own, and he refused to translate its contents. On being pressed, he tore the letter up and threw down the pieces. These were collected, and having been pieced together, the document was translated. It was to the effect that he (the interpreter) need

not be frightened for himself, but that if he brought the Italians into the country he should be rewarded. He was therefore made prisoner, and on his belongings being searched a series of letters were found ready for delivery at various junctures to the different chiefs. In these, the Italians were described as treacherous, and as spies. He was also in possession of a number of presents, some of them being of considerable value, including a burnoose cloak with the cipher of the king embroidered on it, evidently intended as a present. We then discovered that he had borrowed money from many people in the two caravans, amounting to several pounds in all, of which £10 belonged to my men. This sum the Italian General ordered to be repaid. I have but little doubt that the intrigue of this scoundrel would have brought about the failure of the mission, had he accompanied it and carried out, undetected, his pretty little plot.

When at Suakin, I had endeavoured to persuade a friend of this very interpreter to accompany me in a similar position ; but he

refused to go under any conditions. Later on I discovered the reason for his refusal, which was this. He had been one of our interpreters when I was attached to Sir William Hewett's Mission two years previously. It appears that he then secretly conveyed into the country some rifles which were discovered by Ras Alula, the king's generalissimo. Ordinarily, the latter would have insisted on their confiscation, but he was lenient enough to offer the man the market value of the arms. This was at first refused, and more demanded ; but eventually the offer was accepted, and I believe that the matter never came to the ears of Sir William Hewett. Subsequently this interpreter wrote to the king's son, the bishop, and another of the great chiefs of the country, and described Ras Alula as a robber ; after which it is not surprising that he was not anxious to put himself within the Ras's grasp again.

Even with old Bru, who was faithful and willing, I had great trouble in getting satisfactory translations made. He appeared to think that any rough sentence was near

enough. For instance, when out riding at Adowa with Admiral Hewett, we passed through a field of thyme, and other herbs. As our horses' hoofs bruised the leaves, the air became fragrant, and the Admiral told Bru to remark to the chief of our escort on the pleasantness of the smell. With a comprehensive sweep of the hand towards the nearest range of mountains, Bru said in Amharic "This is good," and from the skyward glances of the chief I knew he understood the Admiral to have said "It is a beautiful evening." This being the style of business, five days of incessant worry and work will not seem over-long to occupy in the translation of a letter, containing delicate diplomatic phrases, and in which the giving of offence was particularly to be avoided. The Italian officers were experiencing even greater perplexities in translating the draft of a treaty which they desired to make. To begin with, the phraseology employed in their drafts was of a description so complex, and so involved, that I doubt whether the Amharic dialect, even in the hands of the best inter-

preter, was capable of reproducing it literally. In addition to this, having no Italian-Amharic interpreter, they were working from Italian into German or English, and thence into Amharic.

I might, of course, have pushed on my preparations more rapidly than I had done, but I knew that I could not start until the arrival of a case of cartridges from Woolwich; and, in addition to that reason of my own, I saw that the Italian Mission, for want of mules, was further than myself from being prepared. Besides this, again, there appeared to be some hitches in their preliminary negotiations with Ras Alula which did not promise well for the future. Instructions arrived from Italy that the mission should not leave the coast until some definite meeting place with the king had been fixed. From the first I felt that this was tantamount to abandoning the enterprise, for the Abyssinians would never commit themselves to such a decided arrangement. I recalled the difficulties experienced in this very respect previous to the Hewett Mission; for though

we then left the coast on the assumption that the king would receive us at Adowa, on our arrival there we were requested to travel on still further ; and it was only because of our resolute refusal to move a step further, and after a patient sojourn of five weeks, that the king finally reached that place and entered into negotiations with us. I therefore telegraphed home for instructions, as I considered it probable that the king would postpone negotiating with Italy until after the receipt of the Queen's reply to his last letter. I hoped that if I preceded the Italians I might pave the way for them, and so I requested permission to proceed alone in advance, supposing of course that they would follow me up. The permission accorded to me under this understanding, came in usefully under circumstances which I had not foreseen when seeking it.

As the result of several journeys to Asmara, undertaken by Dr. Nerrazini, to visit Ras Alula, it was ascertained that the king was at Burra-Meda, a place which it would require about sixty days for the Italian caravan to

reach; and allowing about the same number of days for the return journey, and the greater part of a month for negotiations, it was clear that the mission would probably not return to the coast till after the rains in October. These rains commence with the break of the Indian monsoon in June, and during their prevalence travelling is difficult, and in some places impossible, owing to the tremendous torrents of water which pour from the mountain sides into the river beds which they overflow, annually causing enormous devastation of life and property.

I had ridden out to Monkullu early one morning with Lieutenants Bonnefoi and Capacchi, to meet the Doctor whom we expected from one of his journeys to the Ras. Soon after he arrived, there came in a caravan which he had passed earlier in the morning, and which had been set upon, and robbed of all its goods, by a band of marauders under the command of Debbub, a notorious outlaw and a relation of the king. It was, of course, a mere chance that the Doctor, who was alone, had not been

the victim instead of the caravan. A small body of troops was sent out in search of the robbers, and, during a skirmish at long range, one of the Italian soldiers was struck by a bullet which hit a cartridge in his pouch. This cartridge was in a packet with others, placed heads and tails, and it was a piece of good luck that the one struck should have received the blow on the bullet, for all round it were the capped ends of the other cartridges, which would have exploded at the man's side had they been struck.

My visits to the out-lying stations were always most interesting, for I could not help admiring the taste displayed by the officers and men in arranging their huts and the surrounding ground. The latter, indeed, though sandy and apparently incapable of producing anything, had in many places been converted into veritable gardens, producing vegetables which added very much to the enjoyment of the service rations on which the men were living. At Assab Bay, where the settlement is older, Italian husbandry has worked wonders, and it was with

no little pride that General Pozzolini used occasionally to point to a dish of his countrymen's colonial products on the table, asparagus or some other delicacy, produced by labour and skill from a soil hitherto regarded as sterile in the extreme.

While waiting for the preliminary questions at issue between Italy and Abyssinia to be settled, I took the opportunity of a fast gun-vessel, the *Andrea Provano*, going to Suakin, to accompany Lieutenant Bonnefoi to that port, where he hoped to obtain the loan of some pack-saddles for his caravan. We embarked late one night, and though the vessel's accommodation was limited, we were made as comfortable as hospitality and a seamanlike resource could make us. We sailed early on the following morning and spent the day at sea, arriving at Suakin on the second day out. The Commander, Bonnefoi, and I, went to call on Sir Charles Warren, the Governor-General. He was unable to accede to our request for pack-saddles, as the stores did not contain sufficient for an emergency, should one arise

which would require transport arrangements for a force in the field. Another object of our voyage was the despatch of some telegrams to Rome, for which we had to wait replies. In the early morning I took two of my hosts out riding around Suakin. It had been my custom to ride out as far as the line of cavalry vedettes, and on this occasion I was doing the same, having seen the cavalry go out some time earlier. After riding some distance I began to have misgivings as to the safety of my position, and anxiously scanned the bush-covered country for signs of the vedettes. While still riding on, a shell was discharged from Fort Foulah and burst some few seconds later at a safe distance from me, but in tolerably good direction. From this I judged that we were pretty close to an ambush of Arabs and that the shell was either directed at them, or as a signal to us. Not wishing to turn my back on the spot where I imagined the danger to be, especially as our horses were fresh, and somewhat restive at the explosion, I half-turned and rode along in front of the forts, keeping

a look out for Arabs, till I picked up the body of cavalry and rode in with them. On inquiry at the fort I learned that I had been riding hard into a body of Arabs, and that there remained but a short hundred yards between them and myself. My companions were well pleased with their adventure, the sequel to which I heard, when in Rome, some six months later. It appears that Generals Warren and Pozzolini met in Cairo on their homeward journeys, and from the latter I heard that Sir Charles Warren was much incensed at my conduct in risking my companions as I had done, so I concluded that it was fortunate that I had not met Sir Charles again before returning to Massowah. The replies to our telegrams arrived in the course of the afternoon, and we sailed with them on the following morning, reaching Massowah on the afternoon of the succeeding day. During the passage we experienced a head-wind and choppy sea, which, if it did not put me *hors de combat*, had the effect of rendering me glad that on this occasion I was only a passenger, and not a working hand,

and therefore able to indulge in siestas in a deck chair between involuntary interruptions.

Previous to my voyage to Suakin, I had learned that the Italians had received information of a revolt against King Johannis by the Wollo Gallas, a fierce tribe of converted Mussulmans dwelling on his south-east frontier. This news had come originally from a French convent, to the French Consul at Massowah, by whom it had been communicated to the Italians. It was reported that a courier from the convent, though accompanied by an Abyssinian representative, had been unable to pass Wojerat on his road to the head priest, on account of the robbers and Galla rebels. It was also stated that the king was much embarrassed in the midst of many insurrections. I attributed this story to an intrigue on the part of the Abyssinians, to prevent the messenger from the Roman Catholic convent travelling, and placed no faith in the report. I believe, however, that the Italians reported this amongst other matter to their government, for on the 10th of March, after the arrival of telegrams from

Rome, the General informed me that in consequence of the king being at too great a distance to admit of the mission reaching him, carrying out its negotiations, and returning to the coast before the rains set in, he and his officers had been ordered to return immediately to Italy, their mission being postponed to a more convenient season.

It now became difficult to decide as to my own movements. On the one hand, my duties could be carried out apart from the Italians. On the other, it seemed probable that I might be unable to traverse the country, if it were in the disturbed state which it was reported to be in ; further, it was probable that Ras Alula would put obstacles in the way of my doing so, in order to prevent my becoming cognizant of the extent of the existing troubles. The reasons advanced for the postponement of the Italian Mission weighed also with me, though of course, with a smaller and very well-equipped caravan, I hoped to be able to perform the journey very much more rapidly than the Italians could do.

General Pozzolini was very much dis-

tressed at being recalled, as he had set his heart on bringing his mission to a successful conclusion. He asked me what I proposed to do, and I replied that I would sleep on the question for a night, and tell him next day, but that I expected to determine to proceed alone. My reflections had the expected result, and I decided to commence my march inland when the vessel conveying my intended colleagues should leave the harbour for Italy. No one believed it possible for me to get beyond Asmara, which is but three days' journey from the coast; but I did not consider that I should be doing my duty, unless I proceeded at least that far in order to satisfy myself as to the practicability of completing the entire journey. The permission to proceed alone at my discretion now came in handy, and on this occasion I considered that the whole was greater, and therefore better, than its part, and so preferred not to consider discretion better than valour. I employed the two following days packing up and preparing finally for a start, writing a few last letters, and completing my

official despatches up to date before leaving the coast. Every hour seemed to dispel the difficulties, and I soon became positively sanguine of success, and elated at the prospect of undertaking alone, a journey from which a strong mission had been recalled. On the evening of the second day my intended fellow-travellers had embarked, and were to sail on the following day. I went on board the vessel to bid them farewell, and was much touched by the distress of the gallant General and his officers at their recall. On board the steamer at the same time were the members of Count Porro's Mission, who were also to sail on the following day, in another vessel, for a port to the southward, whence they would proceed to Shoa. It had occurred to me that, should I find the king in the far south of his dominions, I might leave the country in an opposite direction to that from which I had entered it, and make the coast at Tajourah, instead of retracing my steps northward to Massowah. In this case I might meet the Porro Mission again, and before parting we discussed the chances of

such a meeting. I must own that I had my misgivings as to the probability of any one of them ever returning to the coast; and as I reciprocated their wishes of "*bon voyage*," I could not help reflecting what might be the fate of either or both parties, though I reckoned my own chances higher than their's. To dismiss the subject, I may say that on my return to the coast, the first news which I heard was that the whole mission had been massacred by the Emir of Harrar and his men.

I shall now leave the story of my actual journeyings in the interior to be told almost in the words of my journal, written from day to day, or as opportunities occurred, under circumstances not conducive to regular writing, or polished and studied phraseology.

IV.

JOURNEY IN ABYSSINIA.

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March 13, 1886.—The steamer in which the mission led by Count Porro was travelling sailed southwards on the night of March 12. The *Africa*, conveying General Pozzolini and his staff to Italy, left soon after midday on the 13th, and by that time my caravan was in motion. Having seen the last of my pack animals off, and all my belongings which were to be left behind having been stowed away, I mounted my mule and started on my march. As I could not well get to Sahaati that evening, and desiring to accustom my men and animals to their work gradually, I was not averse to a short march to begin with, and so decided to halt at Monkullu. This was reached in an hour and a quarter. There were signs of a heavy storm brewing, but had I wished to

do, so I could not have pitched tents in the loose sand, so I stacked my baggage under tarpaulins, picketed my mules, and left my men to their own devices and their supper. My bivouac was just outside the fort, but I was invited to dine with the officers in their hut. I was further very fortunate in being offered the bed of a young officer, Lieutenant Moniscalcis, who would be on duty all night. During the night it rained in torrents, and there was much thunder and lightning. The rain beat through into the compartment of the hut which I occupied, but mercifully did not reach the bed, though the ground was an inch deep in water, and everything was afloat. By taking my clothes into bed with me I kept them dry; but sleep was entirely out of the question, and I wished heartily for daybreak, that I might turn out and commence my march in order to dry my people and animals in the sun.

March 14.—Just when I should have liked to start, down came more rain, literally in sheets; and when I had got into my boots and waded out to see my caravan, I found

them all shivering, and so miserable that I decided to wait and let them breakfast and get a little dry. By eleven o'clock I was able to make a start, and having taken leave of my kind hosts, I turned my back on civilization and white faces. The Italian General had provided me with a Bashi-Bazouk escort, and we ambled along at a fair pace for the loaded mules, over a level sandy road, now and again crossing the dry beds of watercourses, occasionally threading our way between hillocks or large boulders, till after a short march of three hours and a half we reached Sahaati. Here there is good water, as water goes in these parts, and a deep pond in which the men were able to bathe and splash about. It was not necessary to unpack my tents, as there is a zeriba, or enclosure, containing some huts which were built to accommodate the Hewett Mission on its return to the coast in 1884. They have since then been occupied by the Bashi-Bazouks in the pay of Italy, and both huts and occupants have long been a sore subject with the Abyssinians, who regard them as an

encroachment, and have always considered that they portend invasion sooner or later. My men were bivouacked and my animals picketed within the zeriba, and during the early hours of the night I amused myself listening to the chatter of the former as they sat in groups around the fires making their bread. In Abyssinia there are as many kinds of fancy bread as in France, but on this occasion they were making what is called *burrakutta*, in which the dough is rolled round a hot stone and placed among the ashes of a glowing wood fire. Though as heavy as lead, when prepared by this process, it is nevertheless palatable, and that is the great thing when an active outdoor life renders one independent of digestion. They seemed a merry lot of chaps as they jabbered and laughed, till one by one they rolled themselves up in their cotton shrouds and dropped off to sleep, and I wondered how they would stand by me in the hours of adversity which probably lay before me.

Overhanging our little encampment were two high rocky hills, and on the top of

one, as the moon rose above it and showed up its dark form against the silvery background, I could see dusky figures moving stealthily about, while others seemed to be washing clothes, and others again—perhaps some devout Mussulmans belonging to an Arab caravan — appeared to be standing, kneeling, and bowing, alternately, as if in prayer. This very spot has been the scene of not a few deadly encounters between the Abyssinians, who regard it as their frontier, and various bodies of foreigners who have encroached on it in a threatening manner. It has an advantageous position for its defenders, for, lithe as monkeys, and sure-footed as antelopes, they rapidly descend the rocky steep, and dash into the ranks of the invaders, carrying death and defeat with them, almost before the latter have had time to realize the presence of a foe.

I watched with considerable interest the preparation of my first supper. I have an Abyssinian cook, or rather a youth engaged as such, but his lack of qualification is already apparent, and I see that

Mahomed will have to superintend the cuisine. Eventually I get some Erbswurst soup. For the information of some of my readers, I should explain that this is a compound of pea-flower, dessicated meat, and vegetables. It is packed in rations, each in a small tin cylinder with a lid at either end, so that to prepare it, all that is necessary is to remove both lids and push the solidified contents into a saucepan of boiling water. It is a convenient and not unpleasant ration as a rule, but somewhat unfortunately mine is maggoty. However, the effect is not perceptible when the compound is converted into soup, and on this I congratulated myself since I could not rectify it. Tinned sausages with ship's biscuit and boiled rice complete a very enjoyable repast.

As I sit on my creaky camp-bed, listening to the laughing and jabbering, I notice how a couple of years with Europeans alters these natives. Last time I travelled with Kassa he went shoeless, and shrouded in an Abyssinian toga. Now he stalks about in a suit of blue and white striped

tick, which I recall as the former property of a fellow-traveller. A broad pistol-belt encircles his waist, and from it dangles a fierce knife—a compendium of tools and corkscrews. Thick woollen stockings are pulled up outside his trousers, while heavy boots and a thick tweed coat complete an attire more suited to the polar regions than a shade temperature of 88 degrees. Mahomed and Kassa appear not to have been hitting it off together during the last few days, and I mentally plan how I shall prevent these two from open dissension; for one is a Christian, after his own manner, the other a Mussulman, after his, I suppose, for I never see him at his prayers like a true son of the Prophet. To my surprise, therefore, Kassa volunteers some praise of Mahomed. "Mahomed a good man?" I ask, a little doubtful of having understood aright. "Yes," is the reply, "very good man. He like you very much, do everything for you, and make all people do, not like some people." I have often wondered at Mahomed's seeming officiousness, and the

trouble he takes with the caravan, which I look upon as outside his sphere of work; but I seize the opportunity to tell Kassa that he and Mahomed must get on well together for the good of the work I have to do. Another small scrap of a boy who was with us before, is again in my caravan, armed with a big pistol, a filter, and a bundle of bedding as big as himself. I have to thin down the belongings of my people considerably, or I should be overburdened before long.

Fearful of being devoured alive if I sleep within a hut, I stretch my camp-bed outside; but the midges attack me; my face, lips, and neck are burnt and scorching; and sleep refuses to come to me. Suddenly the moon is hidden, a torrent of rain descends, and I seek shelter, and eventually find sleep, within the hut.

March 15.—Leaving Sahaati at half-past six, I commenced a steep and rather rugged ascent. A luxuriant growth of vegetation contrasts strongly with the arid desert now left behind; numerous trees afford a welcome protection from the rays of the sun, which

even in this early month have acquired a power which must be felt to be appreciated. My path lay over a series of undulations, sometimes rocky, at others sandy and less difficult, until an altitude of about one thousand feet was attained. From this height one looks over an even decline on to the fertile plain of Ailet. On the road I met several caravans, one of 77 camels loaded with date matting, another of 41 carrying hides and poles. After a march of three hours and a half I reached the plain, and sending back my Bashi-Bazouk escort, I was taken charge of by an Abyssinian chief called Sheleka Aria. The village of Ailet is situated near the foot of the slope. Although small, supplies are plentiful and game abounds on the surrounding plain. To the south-west, at the foot of a range of low hills, are several hot mineral springs. The temperature of the pools is such that the water cannot be entered suddenly, but a bath in it is said to have wonderful effects in many cases of disease. When cool, the water is pleasant to drink. After a rest for tiffin, I resumed my march.

Sheleka Aria had sent a messenger to ask if I would go on with him. As I desired to avoid his company without giving offence, I sent an effusive reply in the affirmative and dawdled over my preparations for a start, with the result that he rode out from the village before I was ready. I then said that I would overtake him, and I started my caravan slowly after him, bringing up the rear myself. I had not ridden far when I found him and his men resting under a shady tree. As I had got my mules safely past him I stopped to talk with him, and after a while I took my leave, explaining that I had to look after my men. The Abyssinians when travelling, gallop their animals for some distance and then take a short rest, and, as I preferred to keep steadily on at a uniform pace, Aria and I passed each other several times during the afternoon. At one point on the road where the gaps between the trees gave one a view of the surrounding hills, we saw three fine antelope with spirally twisted horns. These beautiful animals drew a shower of bullets from the Abyssinians, but

as far as I could see they escaped unhurt. A march of two hours and a half brought me to the Sabaguma Plain, and as I judged that my escort would want to go on to their huts at Ghinda, I anounced my intention of camping at the former place for the night. By this means I ridded myself of my guardians, who accepted with alacrity my permission to proceed, after I had prescribed a remedy for the chief's watch, which either did not keep good time or would not go at all. My road from Ailet had taken a southerly direction. For about two miles the track lay through bush, but as Sabagumba is reached this gives way to vegetation of a richer nature. The plain is surrounded by hills which are well-wooded, and except during the very dry season it is covered with long rich grass, and watered by a stream of fair size, picturesquely hidden, and overhung with trees. The rapidity of the change which takes place in the luxuriant tropical belt which girds the Abyssinian mountains between the altitudes of 1,000 and 6,000 feet, during the months of April, May, and June, is very remarkable. In April,

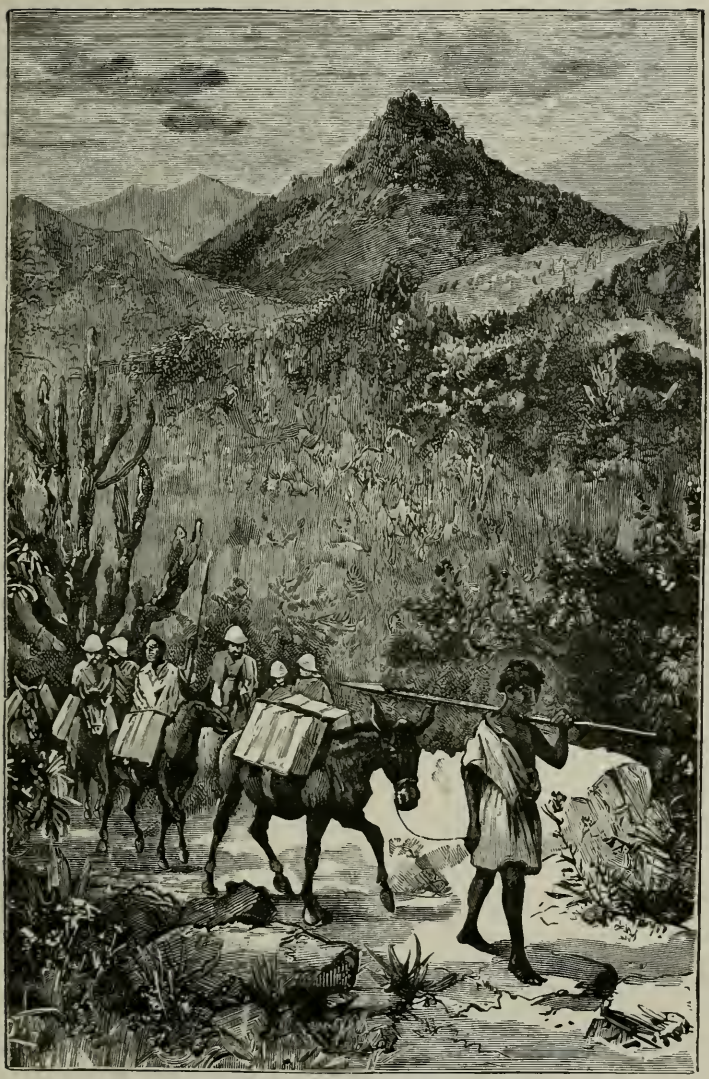
when passing on a previous journey, rich green grass was abundant, streams frequent, and water plentiful. Early in June, there is but a little scorched grass left, while the streams have either disappeared entirely or diminished into mere tricklets. From these it is a work of some moments to collect a cupful of muddy liquor wherewith to assuage the parching thirst induced by a long, dusty march in the glare of the sun, which strikes one both directly, and indirectly by refraction from the torrid ground. The same spot under these altered conditions is not recognizable. Sabagumba was teeming with pigeon, partridge, jungle-cock, and guinea-fowl, so I laid in a stock for my pot, but the long grass was wet, and drenched me through waist-high, which didn't matter after all, as the rain came down in torrents before I could reach my tent.

March 16.—Torrents of rain all night, and heavy mist in the morning, made it advisable not to start as early as I should have liked; but, some Arabs passing with unoccupied oxen, I agreed with them to carry my wet

tents to Asmara, by which I freed two mules, and so was able to lighten my loads all round for the steep and rocky climb which lay before me. From Sabaguma I reached Ginda in three hours and seven minutes. The path, always a trying one, was doubly so as the stones were very wet and slippery, and a heavy rain continued to fall nearly all the way. The sun came out as I reached Ginda so I passed on, determined to get another two hours' march out of the day. Then the weather became miserable again—heavy Scotch mist with occasional heavy showers continued till 4 o'clock, when I camped on an open space called Arigzana. Everything was very green, and but for the rain, the march would have been very pleasant; as it was, it was anything but that, and I was very glad to get into my tent and some dry clothes.

March 17.—At 1 a.m. I sent two of my men to Asmara to purchase grain and bring it down to meet me at Felagoby, where I intended to halt in the middle of the day. At 7.30 I marched, but not finding the grain at the rendezvous, I went on over the

Averobe Pass to Mahenzie, where we met the grain at 11.45 and halted, $4\frac{1}{4}$ hours from Arigzana. From Mahenzie, fifty minutes' march saw us at the pass of that name, sometimes called the Asmara Pass, and two hours after marching we arrived at the village of Asmara. On arriving, we were conducted to a spot where we were told we might make our camp. Ras Alula sent to say that I must rest for the day and come to him on the morrow; he also sent me an angareb, or native bedstead, and two small carpets for my tent. These articles of furniture are returned, on leaving, to the guard, which is always placed over the camp of a stranger. Presents of a cow, bread, tedge, and other articles of food also arrived. The air at Asmara was very dry, and in marked contrast to that experienced on the journey from the coast. We had had enough sun, however, to chap my lips badly, and the dryness of the atmosphere made them very painful. Travellers in Abyssinia should provide themselves with some ointment to alleviate the effect of the hot sun and dry air. I found



A GLIMPSE FROM THE MAHENZIE PASS.

vaseline answer the purpose well. An unsightly decoration on the Asmara Plain is the headless body of one of the Sheikhs of Kassala, who was killed by Ras Alula's order, hanging from a gibbet on a small hill, as a warning to the Mussulmans, who inhabit or may visit Asmara, not to join the cause of the Mahdi.

Asmara is nothing more than a collection of huts inhabited almost entirely by the soldiers of Ras Alula, who, in addition to his position as generalissimo, is also governor of the district of Tigré. At this place, however, one receives one's first impressions of Abyssinian life and customs. The Ras's hut is a fairly large erection, perched, as is usual with the houses of the chief men, on the summit of the highest hill, without any regard either to its accessibility, or for the feet of those who have to ascend to it. The hut is built of poles intertwined with twigs, after the fashion of basket-work, and is thatched. Abyssinian thatching is carried to a pitch of great perfection which I have never seen excelled in any country.

The general height of the Asmara Plain is 7,000 feet. There are no trees on it, very little bush, and the grass is of a coarse tufty description. Grain is the only object of cultivation, and here, as throughout the country, is only cultivated as required to meet the wants of the immediate district, there being no demand for its export. Could such a demand be created, as it should be by the occupiers of Massowah or other ports on the coast, the prosperity of the country would be very greatly increased ; for while nature has supplied Abyssinia with every condition necessary to acquire agricultural prosperity, man has exercised no art to utilize the resources of nature. Unquestionably, the country from its geographical position, combined with the greatly varying altitudes of its face, is well adapted for the production of every conceivable vegetable production, from the hardiest cereals to the most delicate growths of the tropics.

March 18.—In the morning I visited Ras Alula, and presented the claymore sent by Her Majesty, and asked to be sent on to the

king quickly; this the Ras consented to do. In the evening I paid a visit to Lij Fanta, who was the "balderabba" to Admiral Hewett when he visited King Johannis in 1884.

It is customary to appoint a balderabba to attend on strangers in Abyssinia. This official acts as go-between in all matters of ceremony, arranges interviews, and is the medium through which all requests are made. The same custom exists among the Abyssinians themselves, and on parting from a newly-made acquaintance he will usually ask you to name a balderabba, who, on your next meeting, may announce to you the arrival of your friend.

My balderabba on this occasion was Sheleka Aria. Now, this person has a reputation for begging, and to gain such a reputation amongst Abyssinians, the acquirements in this respect must be of a high order indeed. To prevent the torrent of my generosity being diverted from himself, Aria had ordered the guard not to let me leave the camp, and not to allow any one to visit me. Of course, he did not give me any such order, so I did not

hesitate to visit our old friend, Lij Fanta. From the Lij I went to see Sheleka Aria, who, I found, was furious. However, he vented his rage in words which were wasted on my interpreter, and to which, from his position, there was no necessity for me to pay any attention. To end the story, Sheleka Aria returned to his camp at Ginda, having realized, I hope, that he had adopted the wrong tactics by which to obtain backsheesh from me. On my return to the coast he may find it advisable to try smoothing me the other way.

I can see, however, that I am not to be allowed to go on to the king with the amount of despatch which I desire, and I am virtually a prisoner with an ever-vigilant guard over me. The soldiers watch my movements and report to their officer. The latter is officious, and exaggerates his authority, far beyond what I believe to be the intention of Ras Alula. Meanwhile I have much official letter-writing to get through, so I do not feel my incarceration so greatly as I should if I wished to roam or ride about the country.

March 19.—This is one of the days on which Ras Alula holds his judgment or court of appeal, which, in all but the form of its proceedings, corresponds to a similar institution in our own country. Those who are dissatisfied with the judgment of lower courts, bring their cases before a Ras, who confirms or reverses the previous decision. From the ruling of a Ras, an applicant may take his case to the king, and subsequently may even demand to have the law administered according to the Law Book of the country. From this it may be inferred that Abyssinian judges do not always administer justice according to the laws of the land. At the conclusion of the judgment Ras Alula sent for me. The details of our interview referred entirely to the alleged aggressions of the Italians near, more or less, to the coast.

March 20.—To-day I wished to see Ras Alula with a view to going on to the king, or back, as might seem most advisable, but the soldiers delayed going to my balderabba for the necessary permission, so I woke them up by starting to go to the Ras. This brought

them to their senses, and I got an interview arranged for to-morrow, as it was too late to-day. Sheleka Aria having gone to Ginda, his son Avera acts in his place. He is only 15, but has a great opinion of himself, and has without doubt been instructed by his father as to his behaviour to me. He says his father is not bad at heart, and only restricts me for my own good ; but I know better. If I liked to mention this matter to the Ras or Lij Fanta, Sheleka Aria would be in hot water ; but it is not worth stirring up strife about, though I should like to visit the caves of Mount St. George, where there are some very old mummies in a very good state of preservation.

March 21.—I had another interview to-day with Ras Alula, and wished to proceed to-morrow, but he said Tuesday, as he wished to write letters on Monday, and knew I did also. Their strict observance of the Sabbath precludes the Abyssinians from writing letters on that day !

March 22.—Avera sold us a cow to-day for seven dollars, which Ras Alula had sent as a

present a few days ago, but which the guard had hidden. I find that my servant has been using my very small supply of tinned butter for cooking, with enough ghee or native butter at hand to fry all the oxen in Abyssinia. Finished my letters, and glad I am to be rid of them. Heard that Saad Effendi, with presents from the Egyptian Government, is close here, so hope we shall travel to the king together. (This turned out to be pure fiction, Saad Effendi not having left Massowah.)

March 23.—Ras Alula's judgment again to-day, which did not finish till noon. Then I found that one of my men, and a messenger whom I had retained to take letters to the coast for me, had been sentenced to imprisonment for an offence which has recently become a most heinous one in Abyssinia on account of the increased chances which it gives for the spread of small-pox, against which disease great efforts are being made by vaccination. This is done from young children, and the operation is not confined to the arm, as with us, but numerous incisions are made over the

body. Tired of delays, I sent my interpreter to the Ras to obtain permission to go, to arrange for guides, and to decide on the route. The king is said to be at Burra Meda, to the south of Lake Haik, where he has lately built himself a new palace. The shortest road would have been along the highlands on the eastern frontier, but the Ras sent us by a road more inland, in order to avoid passing through the Wojerat district and the adjacent country, reported to be ravaged by the Wollo Gallas. He has given us three soldiers, one to accompany us to the king, and assist us generally, a second as a guide through the district of Tigre, *i.e.*, from the River Balasa to the River Weri, and the third as a guide in Tembien until we are delivered to Lij Bru, who will undertake our transmission to the king. So in the afternoon we made a march of less than three hours to Averentante, a little short of the village of Addi Hawisha, where Ras Alula used formerly to pitch his camp. It was a relief to be on the march again, and I freed myself very cheaply from the crowd of

begging people at Asmara. From Asmara to Averentante, with the exception of one rugged and steep ravine, the road is fairly level, and, though stony in places, is easily traversed by mules at a walk. The Ras gave the principal soldier orders to supply us with thirty loaves of bread and one madega of grain at each village where we should camp. The madega is an indefinite and varying quantity. In Tigre it consists of sixteen misias, in Amhara of ten. But the misia also varies in different parts of the country, and the king's misia is double that of the ordinary one. So only by knowing the actual size of the misia at each place, and the number that make the madega, could one furnish an idea of the contents of a madega ; though in a madega of barley sent from the king one gets double the quantity received in a measure of the same name from the Ras or the headman of a village.

March 24. — We left Averentante this morning, and our path immediately took us across the bed of a torrent. Shortly afterwards we passed Addy Hawisha on our left,

situated at some distance from the road, on a hill. A series of ravines are then crossed, the levels of which, however, only vary about 120 feet; there is cultivated land at the bottom of each. From the ravines we passed to slightly undulating ground, parts of which are cultivated, while the rest is overgrown with tufts of coarse, dry grass. The people burn the grass, and this, after a shower of rain, induces a new and finer growth.

The village of Woghartie is passed to the left of the track. Opposite it, on the right, is a high red rock, on which we saw a great number of large, long-haired monkeys, as big as small men. From Woghartie the path undulates, ascending gradually till it brings the traveller in sight of the extensive Plain of Gura, across which the paths are plainly visible. At this point the road takes a turn to the southward. There are two descents to the plain, but it is advisable to pass on to the further with loaded mules, as the nearer is very steep and difficult, though not quite impracticable, for all my mules descended safely, though in the course of the descent I found

it advisable to dismount. From the bottom, the path across the plain is unmistakeable, as it gradually develops into a broad, sandy road, in consequence of being much traversed by soldiers. The village of Gura is situated on a small hill, which can be made out from a distance by two trees on its summit, one upright in the middle, and the other apparently falling over the right or west edge of the hill, looking south. While traversing the plain, one can see the Kyahkhor Pass to the eastward. It was near here that the Egyptians were routed in 1878, when they left their forts to attack the Abyssinians who wished to reach the water at Gura. During the wet season (June—August) water is plentiful at and near Gura, but during the so-called dry season there is only a stream about a mile and a quarter south-east of the village.

The position of Gura is wrongly placed on Keith Johnston's map, but correctly on the route map which accompanies the book of "Routes in Abyssinia," compiled at the War Office previous to the expedition of 1868. On two other maps in my possession, Wyld's

and a German one, it was not marked at all. And here I may remark that only the War Office map was of any use whatever to me as a route map ; the others give one a general idea of the positions of principal towns and villages, sufficiently accurate for rough use or reference only.

We camped near the water beyond Gura, on ground which afforded good pasture for the animals.

On the road, one of my mules died of a sickness which is common amongst animals in Abyssinia. I was told that it was caused by a change from low to high land, and that this year many mules had been lost from it. The sickness commences by a kind of sneezing cough, which gradually increases in strength till spurts of white foam are expelled from the mouth and nostrils. Often the animal affected appears to become delirious and turns round and round, or walks backwards, eventually lying down and, after a few struggles, dying. To avoid this disease the Abyssinian merchants frequently leave their mules at Asmara, and carry their goods to

the coast on oxen, as they say that the Plains of Ailet and Sabaguma are particularly dangerous. This sickness amongst animals is generally considered as a sign that there will be much fever in the low lands during the summer. The Abyssinian remedy is to get a white goat and make it walk three times round the affected mules. The goat is then killed, and pieces of its skin are hung round the neck of the sick beast, which is supposed to become well from the influence of the spirit of the goat's blood. I was not sufficiently superstitious to give this treatment a trial. The soldier guide, who was to accompany us to the king, had not yet arrived, but through the influence of one of the other two we obtained supplies from the village. The absentee had told my interpreter that he was going to take his wife with us, in order to leave her in his village on the way ; but I saw at once that this would be a cause of delay to me if I permitted it to be so.

March 25.—During the night another mule died, and later in the day a third one, both of which exhibited the symptoms perceived in

the first. This rather crippled me, and I was obliged to delay marching till I could obtain bullocks or porters, as my tents were wet.

The soldier turned up to-day at noon, and declares that the Ras ordered us to remain last night at Woghartie, which would only have been two and a-half hours' march. This is only to cover his own fault of not accompanying us, as he knows well that he has no right to be delayed by his wife, who is not in a condition to travel fast. However, to have enough strings to my bow, I have hired, and pressed into my service, porters and bullocks, and should have made a move, but the rain came down in torrents, with vivid lightning and deafening crashes of thunder.

March 26.—Having hired two bullocks to carry two tents, the soldier requisitioned men from the village to carry the other two. I wished to hire men whom I could take with me as far as they would come, or I required them, because pressed men only carry from their own village to the next, and this process is very slow where the villages are near,

generally only one stage being made daily. But the soldier, who is as obstructive as he can be, will not permit me to hire, and because the Ras said I was to receive at each village at which I should camp, so much bread and grain, he wishes to construe that to mean that I am only to go from one village to another in a day, a rate of travelling by which I might reach the king in twelve months' time. As I would not adopt his view, he went back to the village threatening to go to Ras Alula, but he was prevailed upon by a young chief not to do so; rather to my regret, however, as I knew that Ras Alula meant no such thing, though the good offices of the young chief were well intended. After a couple of hours' exasperating wrangling we at last made a start. I told one of my headmen to keep with the soldier who had charge of the porters carrying the tents. The soldier commenced by leading us out of our way over a high hill in order to reach the village of Halibo, my oxen having taken a good road on the plain. So I determined to leave him to his own devices, telling my man to

remain with him till he could hire bullocks or porters and follow me up.

From the village of Halibo, the path which we took made a steep descent, and then led along the dry bed of a stream for some distance. After this we ascended a rocky but not severe incline, and again traversed the bed of the stream, which was very much obstructed by bushes, till we crossed a hill 250 or 300 feet high. Then we reached a plain with shade and water, and here we halted to rest, near the village of Zahari. From this it will be seen how much off the direct line of our road we had been brought. Partridges were plentiful on the plain, and I occupied myself shooting during our halt, but, owing to the undergrowth, I met with indifferent success. In the afternoon we resumed our march under the voluntary guidance of one of the two remaining soldiers who professed to know the road to Mount Tahuila, which I wished to reach before dark. We were warned to keep close together, as the country is said to be full of lions; however, we suffered no molestation from them. Soon

after leaving Zahari we crossed two streams, or bends of the same stream, at an interval of twenty-five minutes. From the map, it would appear that these are the rivers watering the district of Guzay and the Mai Rahya respectively. In this case the streams should be shown closer one to another, as we could not have crossed the three miles shown between them, in the above time.

The path to Mount Tahuila lies over a plain, of which a little is cultivated, but the greater part is wilderness. Near the mountain one crosses numerous low hills. At half-past six we halted on a slope at the foot of Tahuila. But for having been misguided during the day we should have reached it earlier. Our written language is not sufficiently rich in expletives to enable me to express the measure of exasperation which I felt at these repeated misleadings. None of our tents had come up ; but as I had no intention of camping, rain or no rain, I was not sorry that they had not ; so we bivouacked, and put up as best we could with the rain, thunder, and lightning, which we ex-

perienced from about 8 o'clock till midnight. As the rain beat down on my waterproof sheet, and leaked under it, converting the ground on which I was lying into mud, I could not help thinking of the line in our Harvest hymn which refers to "The soft, refreshing rain," and the idea made me laugh in spite of my discomfort. Tahuila itself is a remarkable freak of nature. It towers more than 1,000 feet above the level of the surrounding country, from which it rises, with the exception of a low sloping base, almost perpendicularly on the south side, and absolutely so on the north. On its crest are one or two small trees; but, as far as we could see, it is tenanted only by the eagles.

March 27.—From Tahuila to the Balasa River, there stretches a desert plain which even the natives dread to cross by day on account of the great heat, the country lying low. It is therefore always crossed at night, when two or three people arrange to travel in company, as, singly, they fear the lions. Filled with apprehension as to my own sufferings, if the natives dread the plain so much, I decided

to cross it as far as possible by night, and was assured that if I left at 5 o'clock a.m. I should be across two hours before noon. This hardly agreed with my own impression of the distance, gathered from my map, so at half-past one I commenced to pack up, and after an hour and a half fumbling about in the over-cast moonlight, we made a start. I was resolved not to be misled again if I could avoid it, so before starting I asked the interpreter if our guide was ready, &c., and he satisfied me on that point. Half an hour later I found the guide had lost the track. This, after yesterday's experience, made me furious, and I found that the interpreter had trusted to one of the soldiers whose district only commenced at the Balasa River. However, I found the road myself, and managed to stick to it till daylight. For the guidance of any one who may follow me on this road, though I hope they will be more fortunate than myself in the matter of guides, I may say that shortly after leaving Tahuila, a village situated on the hills to the left of the road is passed. A short distance beyond

again, the road, which is broad and well-defined, forks. The left branch follows the base of the hills; the right, which should be taken, leads at first nearly due south. It should be kept vigilantly, or one is apt to be deflected from it on to one of the numerous cattle tracks which, traversing the plain, cross it at all angles. It must be remembered that I had passed on the east side of Tahuila, avoiding Haddis Addi, which lies to the south-west.

In the cool morning my mules walked along smartly, I computed at rather more than $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour, as the ground was very level.

The Logo River was rather swollen, and its water very thick from the recent rain. After the Logo we crossed the Tserana, also swollen and thick, and from the high water-mark on its bank, I judged that it would have been difficult to cross it a few hours earlier.

At 8 o'clock I considered it probable that, in spite of the assurances I had received, we were destined to march all day in the sun if

we wished to reach Balasa before night, and as I mistrusted our guide, I decided to halt to rest the animals. We stopped near a small hamlet, tenanted only by herdsmen who have left their villages to tend their cattle in what is at present a bush-covered wilderness, but which, in another month, will have been transformed into a shady pasture-land. Here I had the mortification to find that we had again been led off the road. In this case the increase in distance proved to be very small, and it is the inconvenience of the thorny bushes, through which we came, which causes two other roads, one on either side, to be more frequented. The heat, when I marched again, certainly was considerable; but I did not think it justified the reputation which the plain has acquired as a furnace. I engaged a local guide, and two and a half hours after leaving my halting-place I heard the welcome rushing sound of a river, the Balasa, and knew that I could now fix my position with certainty in spite of the errors of my guides. So I paid my local guide and sent him back, and determined to

go on to a village of which my soldier guide, whose territory now commenced, told me. From the river, the path runs over the spurs of numerous low hills, ascending gradually.

At 4 o'clock, having marched for ten hours, we reached a village called Barhweeleh, near the top of the high lands of Igulla. This village lies to the east of Addi Hailu, which is on another spur of the same mountain range. Both man and beast were tired, as we had marched seventeen miles yesterday and about twenty-three to-day, with very little sleep between. To my disgust, water was scarce, and at first the natives denied the existence of any nearer than Balasa, but my interpreter saw two women carrying pitchers, and so we discovered a well on the hill-side, which supplied enough for the wants of the men. The mules had drunk at the river.

The man who cooked for me had been ailing for some days, and now he was found to be really ill. His face was very swollen, and his tongue had become too large for his mouth, and was very awful to look at. He was also very hot, and some of my men said

it was fever. My old interpreter, however, feared small-pox, and so I had to get him lodged as comfortably as possible in a native cabin. My experience of illness and medicine had been so limited that I was much perplexed as to the treatment I should adopt. The last two days had been full of annoyances and obstacles, and this small-pox idea was not comforting, especially as the victim was my cook. Fever I thought I could manage with salts and quinine, as I knew the Arab doctors do. No tents had arrived, and I could scarcely keep my eyes open. So I had a hut swept out, and determined to occupy it and share it with my interpreter and servant. However, I had not arrived at that stage of roughing it which enables one to sleep in the same shed with cows, goats, and poultry, to say nothing of the uninviting appearance of certain scrofulous humans, so I abandoned my quarters and rigged a shelter of tarpaulins outside the wall.

March 28.—The rain, which threatened last night, did not carry out its threat, and we all had a good night's sleep, in which, from

7 p.m. till 6 a.m. I did not even dream of my troubles; and I hope now that I have come to the end of the mule sickness, and the ignorance and obstructiveness of the guides. Travelling days are always days of worry more or less, but so far I think I have had more than my share. Then there are minor worries. Old Bru is getting, as he calls it, "a little deaf," and so I have to repeat everything two or three times, which is annoying, except when one happens to be in an unusually heavenly temper. My mule is always kicking at real or imaginary camel flies, which attack him in inaccessible places, so he generally kicks my foot in his attempt to dislodge them, and then bolts off if I assist him with my fly-switch. He shies at stones, bushes, and other very ordinary things on the road, so I suspect that he goes to sleep and then wakes up suddenly and finds these objects under his nose. The mule-drivers always lead or drive their beasts through the narrowest places they can find, between trees or rocks, and seem to try to sweep the load off. They always put boxes upside down, with

the locks against the wall or fly of the tent. They prefer to be constantly adjusting the loads when on the march to girthing tight when loading, and if one does not wish to have all the loads under the bellies of the mules, one must, for a time at least, personally superintend the harnessing and loading of each animal. While marching, it is necessary to watch constantly for the appearance of any chafing, as the Abyssinians will allow their mules' backs to be rubbed into a hundred holes rather than take the trouble to remedy the evil. Sometimes when a swelling appears they will burn it in places, and they say doing so disperses the swelling; but, so far as I can see from those of my mules who have been operated on, it does not seem to have a good effect, and gives the animal considerable pain. So I prohibited this burning; but this morning some of the men having burnt two mules, I tied the chief offender to a tree, and put the irons in the fire, saying that I would try burning his back and see if he liked it. Having left him to consider the prospect while I finished my

breakfast, I let him go. Nearly every animal—horse, mule, and donkey—in Abyssinia has a large wound on its back, which has at some time or another been burnt in this way, and the effect seems in every case to have been to increase the sore. I think the treatment must be a kindred one to that of the white goat's skin.

As we were about to move off this morning, the two tents carried by bullocks arrived, so we took them along with us on the same bullocks. I was also much relieved to find that my cook is suffering from a disease less serious than small-pox, but one which is very common amongst children in Abyssinia, and known as "kumho." After two or three days of headache and fever on the part of the patient, pustules, about the size of small peas, form on either side of the uvula, sometimes two or three on each side; when they have broken the sufferer rapidly recovers, and is generally quite well in two days. Sometimes the disease is fatal to the aged, and very frequently so to children. The necessary remedy having been adopted, I

placed my cook on a mule and sent him on quietly in charge of another man, and then went on with the caravan for a couple of hours to Hosha Guza, where I pitched my two recovered tents. This short march will rest the animals, and to-morrow I hope to get the other tents ; they are very necessary, as, though this is not the rainy season, it has rained ten nights out of fourteen since leaving Massowah. From Barhweeleh to Hosha Guza the path first ascends to the Igulla Plateau, where one might camp in comfort, as there are many pools and plenty of grass. From the plateau, a fine panorama of the surrounding country and mountain ranges is obtained. On an adjoining table-land is the finest specimen of the shady wurkeh tree which I have yet seen. Its branches, from a single trunk, spread over more space than is covered by a large banyan tree. From a distance the shape of this tree is like that of a large mushroom, but its outlines are more mathematical. I estimated that it would afford shelter to 800 men. Leaving the plateau, a rocky decline is descended, and

then comes a corresponding climb over a hill, and then another descent into a valley. From here the soldier guide, after a wrangle with his colleague and my interpreter, took us to the left, off the direct line of the road. He stated that to-morrow we should go on by another path which he pointed out, crossing a hill to which he led us. He declared that this was also necessary in order to intercept the other soldier and my man, who were carrying the other tents, as they might come by another road. He professed to be going to take us to a point where all the roads crossed; so, with considerable misgiving, I followed him, my interpreter having fallen in with his explanation. I was glad of the luxury of a tent, though I had only been two nights without one, and to enjoy a change of clothing and a bath. We also had an opportunity of drying all our wet gear, and, having done so, down came the rain. The farmers are thankful for this advance on their annual rains, but, as a traveller, I do not share their gratitude.

March 29.—We did not march this morning

till 7 o'clock, as we all overslept ourselves. When we started I discovered that the soldier had purposely led us off our road for a distance of three quarters of an hour, and since it took me the same time to get on it again, this amounted to a loss of one and a half hours, leaving me only half an hour to the good, as the result of two hours' march yesterday. It is useless to repeat, time after time, the annoying effect this kind of thing has on me. The soldier does it in order that he may levy black mail on the villages, which I have no doubt he does in my name. On this occasion it was untrue that the roads crossed near the village, and the path over the hill, which he had pointed out as our route, was not it; so we had to go back to the point where we left the road yesterday. Besides this, my sick man, not finding us, had gone on, and did not rejoin us till we camped in the evening. However, the silver lining of to-day's cloud appeared with the news that the king had left Bura Meda, and was coming to Wolfila Ashangi to take measures against the Azubo Gallas.

The first part of the road to-day was the worst we had yet traversed, hardly excepting the Mahenzie road to Asmara. The first ascent and descent led over slabs of rock and into a small valley. Then a climb, more difficult than the first, over rolling stones, brought us into view of a remarkable conical peak called Enyéné (*i.e.*, wandering round and round), which rises from a small table-land, and is most mathematical in its outline. Detached from the western end of the table-land is Amba Raina, on which is built a church. After crossing an intervening valley the path winds round the base of the Amba, which the traveller leaves on his left. The road here improves a little, and takes one on to a small grassy plain, where ends the district under the control of the headman of Hosha Guza, and where is situated the Custom-house. The chief had accompanied us this far, and so prevented any difficulty which might have arisen with the Custom-house soldiers; he also produced a jar of native beer, and, having refreshed ourselves, we parted from our Hosha Guza friend and

resumed our march. From the Custom-house we made a short but very steep and rocky descent into a little valley, and then up again on the other side ; in fact, for about five hours from Hosha Guza one is continually making small ascents and descents, which are fortunately not long, as they are all steep and rugged. I halted for two hours in the middle of the day, and soon after marching reached the ravine through which the River Angueya runs. Unlike the streams previously crossed, which were swollen and muddy in consequence of the rains, the Angueya was almost dry. Five and a half hours from Hosha Guza it is crossed for the first time ; it is crossed five times in all, at intervals of five minutes. At the fourth passage is a high perpendicular rock, which contains good iron in considerable quantities. Leaving the river, the path leads up a valley, the length of which is divided into about twelve terraces. This valley narrows as it ascends, till at its head the pass is but a few feet in breadth. Then comes a descent and a climb, from the top of which Enyéné is

visible through the pass at the head of the terraced valley; following the path for a few minutes Amba Raina also becomes included in the view. The road now winds along the mountain side for some distance, and then down into the fertile country of Entitcho, which produces potatoes. Seven hours and three-quarters' march from Hosha Guza brought us to Dagasanuie, where I camped. Of twenty miles over the ground, I estimate that I have made good fifteen, and, considering the badness of a great part of the road, am well satisfied.

Dagasanuie signifies "Monday market," and to-day being Monday there were many people still assembled, though the market had broken up. In Abyssinia the weekly market serves the purpose of post, telegraph, and newspaper, for to market, in addition to their wares, people bring all the news, gossip, and scandal of their neighbourhood. The king's proclamations become known over the country by this medium. On the following day, the inhabitants of the village at which a market has been held, go in their

turn to the market of the next village, carrying with them the accumulated news, which in this way is carried throughout the country. We know that news grows as it goes, and from stories I have heard I fancy that Abyssinia is no exception to this rule. However, at Dagasanuie we received confirmatory news as to the king's movements, which made it likely that we should shortly have to change our route. From our encampment Amba Awga bore east. Two fine wild geese were strutting about within thirty yards of my tent, but, as ill luck had it, I had lent my gun to one of my men, who soon afterwards returned with a wretched little pigeon, almost knocked to pieces by the shot.

March 30.—I particularly wished to make an early start this morning, but did not get away till a quarter to 8, as I was delayed by visits from chiefs and others, who brought presents of honey, bread, and so forth. I thought to get rid of them by giving them a box of cartridges, which they accepted and took away. Soon they returned, and begged that I would give them money instead. So

I had to give five dollars in addition, and then got away with my three zinc pails full of honey, as one is always obliged to return the jars or gombos, in which the honey or tedge, as the case may be, arrives. From Dagasanuie to the south, there are two roads between which to choose—one leading away at first in a south-west direction, and the other about south. I was told that the former is very stony, with very many ascents and descents, and was advised to choose the latter, which I did. We commenced by a climb of 750 feet up the very steep side of a very rocky mountain, and had it been at the end instead of at the beginning of our day's march, I am confident that many of the animals would have been unable to accomplish it. On the table-land which is then reached, every little scrap of land is under the plough. The ascent to another ledge, about 150 feet above, is then made, and from there a very fine view of the surrounding country is obtained, from Senafe on the east, to the south end of Addi Huala on the west. A somewhat precipitous descent of 600 feet

is made, after which the decline to the plain and valley watered by the Feras Mai is gradual. Feras Mai means Horse River, *i.e.*, swift-running river, but at this time we found it nearly dry. We reached it in four and a half hours from Dagasanuie, and then halted. On resuming our march the path diverged from the bed of the stream and crossed the abutting spurs of Ambas Haheileh, Saneyti, and Tsedia. The first-named is probably that shown on the War Department map as Amba Kwalhatze, but I was unable to identify it under that name. The track winds round Tsedia to the left, and in a valley under the mountain I camped for the night. During the forenoon, the guide again tried to lead us over some hills to a village, where he wished to halt in the middle of the day. I refused to be led, and took my caravan by the path over the plain, which from my map and compass I felt sure was the right one. On several occasions my map indicated other tracks than those by which the soldiers led us, and when I remonstrated with them they pleaded ignorance

or denied the existence of such paths, though often I had the writings of former travellers to assure me. This led me to the conviction that the soldiers only know the king's road, by which they are accustomed to march. Having once or twice proved the soldiers to be in the wrong, I induced them to inquire at villages for the paths usually traversed by the natives, a course which would naturally be adopted by a traveller proceeding through the country unofficially, and without the doubtful assistance of the soldiers. Eventually I taught my guides that, as I carried provisions and tanks, I could supply myself with food, forage, and water whenever necessary, and so prevent the loss of time incurred by having to leave the road to camp at an off-lying village, in order to obtain those necessaries.

March 31.—To-day, again, we commenced our march with a steep and rugged, though not very long, climb, which brought us upon the table-land of Tsai. Soon after, when we arrived at the spot where the Adowa-Hawzen road crosses, we parted from our Tigre soldier

guide, and I experienced a feeling of relief as I sent him away and commenced afresh with the soldier who would guide us through Tembien, and deliver us to the care of Lij Bru, the Governor of that province.

I cannot in all cases reconcile my own observations with the positions of certain mountains, villages, or roads as laid down in the map which accompanies "Routes in Abyssinia;" though, as a rule, I have found that compilation marvellously accurate, considering the rough material from which it was drawn up. Thus I made the Adowa-Hawzen road cross that from Entitcho to Gullibudda to the south of Tsedia, and not through or to the north, as shown. This I think is due to Tsedia being placed too far south; it adjoins Saneyti, being closer to it than appears from the map.

In Tsai there is much land under cultivation, and several villages: the road passes through that of Mohundillo, which is situated on the south side of a small valley, about an hour and three-quarters after reaching the table-land.

For three hours in the middle of the day we halted on the edge of the descent to the plain watered by the Weri River. The descent, for a short distance, is very precipitous, but the path afterwards winds over a level plain. Having crossed the plain, one comes suddenly on a sluggish stream completely hidden by trees; after which some low hills strewn with white quartz are reached. Half an hour from the last stream brings one to the Weri. When I arrived on the bank most of my caravan had already crossed the stream, and the people on the other side were shouting to hasten the rest of us. It had been raining heavily for about an hour, so I knew at once the cause of the consternation, and hurried across. On reaching the opposite bank I came suddenly upon a small tributary of the river, down the hitherto dry bed of which a considerable body of water was advancing to the main stream, increasing in volume every moment. We all crossed before the water had gathered enough force to make the stream dangerous, but the incident, and our subsequent march over the

land which this stream drains, gave me a good idea of the rapidity and force with which these Abyssinian torrents accumulate their water after even a little rain.

From the Weri River one climbs, by an easy ascent, the side of the range of hills on the top of which Gullibudda is situated. If not desirous of halting at, or passing through, Gullibudda, the hills may be avoided by following a path which keeps to the plain, to the west of the range. Though the road passes through land which in the distance appears fertile, I was told that there are no villages near the track, and that the lowland was productive of fever. These reasons, though they diverted me from passing a night on the plain, should not prevent the road being used for a march during the day, when supplies are not required. At this time of the year the distant view of a country is very deceptive. The bright, fresh green of the budding acacias gives to a plain an appearance of great fertility, which is very disappointing on a nearer approach, the miles of acacias through which one

passes in Abyssinia being very wearying. From the village of Gullibudda one has a fine view across the plain to high mountain ranges of Geralta and Tembien.

April 1.—Descending easily from Gullibudda to the plain, the path leads in a south-westerly direction towards a conspicuous gap between the Tembien range to the left and a mountain crowned by two Ambas to the right. The left Amba is Svandas, the right Wurk'amba, and between the two is a church which shows up white in the sunlight. There is a somewhat similar double-headed mountain, called Karara, near the west end of the Tembien range, but the path tends always in the direction of the low gap, which is a good landmark for the traveller. Two hours from Gullibudda the village of Selkin, situated on a hill to the north of the road, the residence of Lij Bru, Governor of Tembien, is passed. The plain is well watered and very fertile, producing great abundance of red pepper; many fine trees are scattered over it, chiefly the wurkeh, mewmen, and large acacias, which are now putting forth their pink, white,

and yellow blossoms. Having crossed the plain and arrived near the foot of the Tembien range, one passes close to Endabba Salama, or Amba Salama. In the War Department map this mountain is placed close to the Weri River, whereas it is really situated under the mountains on the other side of the plain, about eight and a half miles south-west. It is by no means conspicuous, being hidden in a recess formed by the high table-land at the back, and two hills, the bases of which almost meet in the foreground. This will be seen from the sketch which accompanied Gordon Pasha's account of his visit to King Johannis in 1879, though he passed the Amba by the hill road, *i.e.*, to the south, while I passed it on the north. Bearing about south-east the Amba is in full view, but following the path it soon becomes shut in by three low, round-topped hills in the near foreground, and is not again visible. I mention this at length, because the incorrect position of the Amba, shown as a mountain standing by itself on the Weri River, is most misleading, and would have lost me nearly a day's march

had I not had a guide with me. The two surviving sons of Theodore, and Waled-el-Mikael, are at present prisoners, with others, on the Amba.

I halted in the middle of the day at Wullagussie, a lovely spot at the foot of the Tembien hills, and in the gap between them and Svandas. Here there is good water, the last before reaching Takherakira. In a hollow under the hills is a spring, resorted to by the sick; a shrine and church are also attached to it, and receive considerable contributions from those who seek to be cured at the waters.

While halted, Kassa, whom I had left at Gura to accompany the soldier who was carrying my two tents, rejoined us. He reported that he had accompanied the soldier for some days and wished to hire bullocks or mules to bring on the tents, but the soldier invariably adjured him in the name of the king not to do so, and insisted on continuing to carry them from village to village. Kassa therefore left him and hastened on to overtake me. Soon after he had parted from me at Gura his mule became very ill, and he ex-

pected it to die. As a last resource he tried the goatskin treatment, with the result that the mule recovered, and in two days he was able to ride it. This miraculous cure did not however convince me. The mules all contracted the same disease at the same time, and those to which it proved fatal all died within a few hours of each other. Several others were attacked less severely, and all recovered, as was the case with Kassa's.

Kassa and his party of carriers had encountered a lion when passing through the district near Mount Tahuila. He told me that he was riding a short distance in advance of the others, when he saw a lion standing and looking at him. He pulled up and looked at the lion, his mule being very uneasy, and shouted to the others to come up with a rifle. This they did, and the lion ran away !

On resuming our march, the fertile country traversed in the morning suddenly gave place to sandy desert, covered with mimosa and acacia. A very gradual ascent is made to the foot of the mountain of Takherakira, whence the road becomes rocky, but not very

difficult. We passed through the large villages of Takherakira and Ad'Abergullie, and, turning abruptly to the left, round the foot of the overhanging rocks, we arrived at Abbi Addy.

For two hours the clouds had been pouring forth a deluge of rain, which flooded the paths and formed rivulets and little torrents between every rock, rendering the ground so greasy and slippery as to make it most difficult for the mules to hold their footing. We were, therefore, glad to camp under a large wurkeh tree on the outskirts of the village, and to do what we could to dry and warm ourselves, as the rain had made us very cold. The crashing echoes of the thunder as it pealed through the high cleft rocks, which surrounded us on three sides, would certainly have deafened me had I not been to a certain extent habituated to such noises by the discharge of heavy guns on board ship.

Lij Bru is at present absent from his usual residence, superintending the building of a church at Mefta, the native place of the king's father; but Belata Kidano, his deputy,

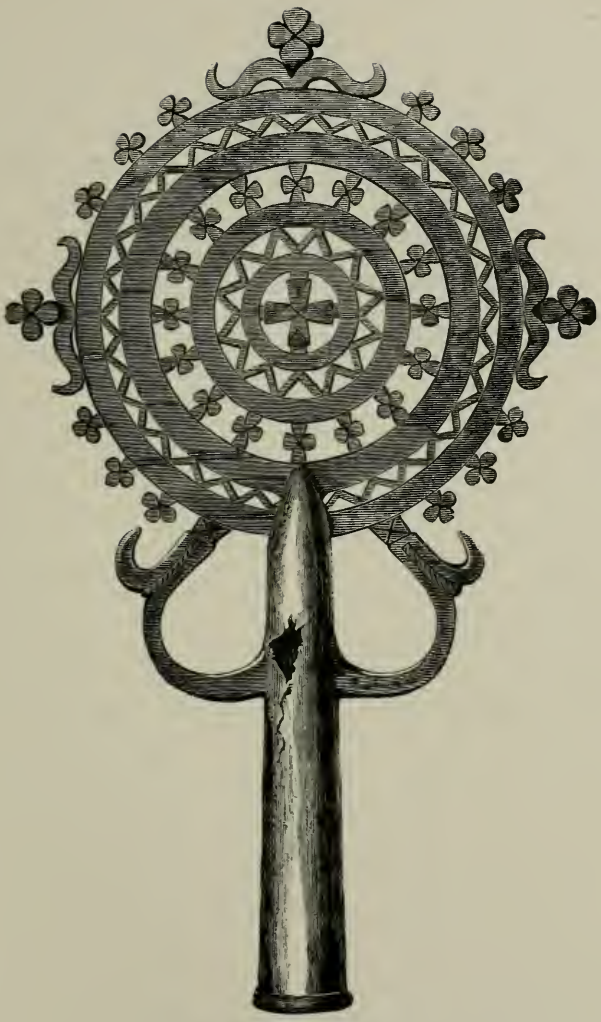
is acting for him, and seems very kindly disposed towards us. We shall have to wait here till Sunday, in order to obtain information as to the king's movements from the people who will attend the market on Saturday. If it turn out to be true that the king is near the lake, we shall be sent by way of Antalo, which, I am told, is a good road.

April 2.—The sunny part of the day afforded us an opportunity of drying our soaked baggage and clothing. Of course, everything is so packed as to be practically free from harm by rain; but boxes will leak a little after the banging about they get on a journey like this, and skins retain the damp, so it is always a comfort to be able to expose clothes and bedding to the sun for a few hours. The halt is also acceptable to me, as it gives me time to reduce to a more legible form the rough notes, which I make in my pocket-book as my mule jogs along, and which, from the mere fact of his so jogging, remain legible, even to me, only so long as they are tolerably fresh in my memory. I am able also to copy the entries in my rough

cash-book, to balance my cash, and to do many other things which have to be neglected when one marches ten hours, and rests two, out of the twelve hours of daylight. Having adjusted my affairs, I can sit and drink tedge with my visitors with an unclouded conscience, and without wishing them away, as one is apt to do when preoccupied.

April 3.—Definite news was obtained in the market to-day that the apparel of the King's Court has reached Zobul, on the east of the Lake Ashangi, so I leave to-morrow for Antalo and the lake, and hope to reach my journey's end this day week.

I paid a visit to the market, which is held in a convenient open space inside the village. Some thousands of people were assembled from all the neighbouring villages and districts, and the babel of their voices at a distance, sounded like the hum of a large mill-wheel. There was nothing very attractive for sale, and though I bought some Abyssinian jewellery, it was not of such good workmanship as I have found at Adowa. "Amoles," or bars of salt, from the plain



COPPER ECCLESIASTICAL CROSS.

between Abyssinia and the coast, were being sold at the rate of thirty for the dollar; unbleached cotton goods, from the Colaba mills at Bombay, twenty kints per dollar; "superior shirting," whereof the Pyramids and some camels form the trade mark, fifteen kints to the dollar. The kint is the measure from the elbow to the tip of the finger. One washing would convert the superior shirting into inferior mosquito netting, as the fabric appears to consist of a few threads placed at right angles, and held together by white starch, or some similar composition. Incense was sold at the rate of two dollars' weight for one bar of salt. There were many other articles, some of the "utile" and others of the "dulce" order. Shammas, the national toga, from three to five dollars, country-made cloth, very superior to that imported, grain, flour, linseed, antimony, ginger, red peppers, soap plant, the plant called cheyna addam, from which absinthe is made, jewellery, and little French mirrors, are a few of the representatives of each class. Manchester goods are chiefly represented in

this country by the manufactures of Messrs. Tabbush, of that city, and since I have seen the class of goods which finds its way here from England, I have ceased to think so badly as I once did of the low-class Greek traders who supply the king with arms having barrels of the gaspipe order. Besides deriving much entertainment from what I saw in the market, I was the cause of a considerable amount myself, especially to the younger members of the community, who had never previously seen a "feringhee." At my first approach, shoals of little boys and girls, and not a few young ladies, took refuge in flight, but becoming reassured by my pacific behaviour, they returned for a closer scrutiny.

At 9 o'clock I was awakened by my interpreter asking me for ammonia. Unfortunately I had not provided myself with any, for I did not know its medicinal value. The interpreter, when about to go to sleep in his tent, had been bitten by a snake on the finger. The snake had been killed, and its head so destroyed that I was unable to see

whether it was of a poisonous description, but was told that its bite was nearly always fatal. The natives professed to know how to treat the wound, and as I had no idea how to do so, I left the sufferer in their care with confidence, after seeing tremendous emetics of honey and water administered with successful results, and went back to bed.

April 4.—My first care this morning was to find out how the snake-bitten patient was. I was sorry to find him so bad as to preclude any possibility of moving him during the day, so I was obliged to give up marching. The native treatment, in which I had placed so much confidence, had wrought evil instead of good, which did not surprise me when I inquired into the remedies which had been adopted. Besides the emetics, which were administered to prevent the poison reaching the stomach, precautions had also been taken to keep it from entering the heart. Cords had been tied tightly round the wrist, the forearm close to the elbow, and near the shoulder. The bite had been cut about roughly with a razor, and burnt in the fire,

and the back of the hand had been snicked in fifty places to draw off the poisoned blood. The patient had spent a sleepless night, which he had occupied in chewing the leaves and sticks of various herbs; as a result, he was moaning piteously and appeared in great pain, while his arm and hand were swollen tremendously, except where confined by two rings on the bitten finger, and the bindings already mentioned on the arm. I thought I could not make matters much worse, so I induced the old man to let me remove the lashings from his arm, at the risk of letting the poison go to the heart. The native silversmith being unable to get the rings off, I made a fine saw out of a sailor's knife, and thereby removed them. Then I bathed the arm and hand in hot water, and applied a linseed poultice to the bite, and very soon I succeeded in reducing the swelling and putting the patient out of pain. In future I shall trust to my own ignorance rather than to the wisdom of the natives.

Although I have rather enjoyed my enforced rest at Abbi Addy, I hope not to

prolong it beyond to-morrow morning. The village is nicely situated in a horseshoe formed by the hills of Takherakira, which shelter it from the east. These hills are formed of red rock, which appears to be quite bare of earth; notwithstanding this, they are covered with trees and verdure. The roots of the former can be seen climbing up the open crevices in the rock for many feet before they emerge to form the stem or trunk. The bright, fresh, green of the leaves contrasts effectively with the red colour of the ground, and the view from our camp is the prettiest picture by far which I have yet seen in Abyssinia.

To the south-west stretches an undulating plain, across which the high but distant mountains of Semien are visible when they are not being deluged with rain. An extensive, almost boundless, plain is tedious as a view, even when one has not to traverse it; but here nature seems to have limited the landscape so judiciously that, in whatever direction one looks, the eye is pleased, and able to enjoy the sight of objects so well

placed within its range. Behind my tent, the rock is cleft into strange natural columns, that resemble the ruined pillars of some gigantic temple. These strike me, even after travelling through a country in which nothing is more remarkable than the fantastic way in which nature has built and piled the stones one on the other, and I almost cease to marvel at the wonders of Stonehenge and even the Pyramids.

April 5.—During the night our obstructive soldier arrived, but without my tents. He carried them through two villages after Kassa left him, and then the people of Samyta refused to carry for him. He is evidently much afraid of the possible consequences to himself, but tries to brazen it out, and abuses us for going on and making long marches, instead of proceeding day by day from village to village, as, he declares, we were ordered to do. This morning he solemnly adjured us, by the back of the king, not to leave Abbi Addy, but, of course, I laughed at his adjurations, and pushed on my preparations for marching the more

rapidly. Seeing this he gave in, and then insisted on our going by way of Sokota, but this, of course, I had no intention of doing, knowing that the king was near Ashangi, and, backed up by the chief of the village, Belata Kidano, I made him concede this point also, though I should not have been influenced had he not done so. No. 3 soldier, having discharged his duty, left us here, and the obstructive one now recommenced his guidance.

On leaving Abbi Addy, the path leads at first over fairly level ground, till a deep valley is reached ; after which a succession of stony valleys brought us to the top of a descent, from which we had a view of the mountains of Saharte to the south-east, and the highlands of Tembien, now fast being left behind, to the east. Between the two, the path to Antalo passes. We then descended to the plain, and passed on our left the village of Shirha Berawa, situated on the slope of the hills.

This village belongs to the Church, and possesses extensive fruit gardens, which pro-

duce chiefly bananas and the teringo. The latter is to outward appearance like a shaddock, and smells like a lemon. The interior and its taste I can compare to no other fruit with which I am acquainted. The birthplace of Ras Alula is on this plain, which is situated at a lower level than we have descended to since our first ascent from the coast, but the bed of the Gueba River which we are approaching is still lower. Four hours from Abbi Addy we crossed a stream, on the south bank of which is a quantity of curious stone, veined with a hard white quartz or marble, which has resisted the action of the weather better than the stone in which it is embedded, and now stands out in bold relief, the veins crossing each other in every direction.

An hour before midday we halted at Debukh, on the edge of the valley drained by the Gueba. We had been accompanied so far by Belata Kidano, and he now proceeded to a village on the other side of the river to procure us a guide. This chief showed us more hospitality while we were

at Abbi Addy, than we had hitherto received; he was also most assiduous in obtaining reliable information as to the movements of the king, and I gave him a well-deserved present with more than ordinary willingness, because he had done his best to procure remedies when Bru was bitten by the snake. He now gave us a guide in the person of his nephew, who happened to be going to Antalo to sell two mules. From our halting place we crossed the Gueba, swollen by the rains, and by far the most important stream yet passed by us; the water was up to our girths at the ford, and running strongly. We then mounted a gradual ascent through thick bush, which greatly retarded our progress. Two hours from the river we commenced a truly awful climb; and having been sent to Antalo because the road was good, I was rather disgusted. The ascent from Gueba surpasses even Mahenzie, both in point of its steepness and the difficulty of getting loaded animals through the rocks. We clambered for a long way by the side of a valley which

is curiously blocked near the top by a wall of rock, over which, judging from the water-mark, a considerable cascade must fall in the wet season. Our climb finished, we were landed on a table-land, partly in cultivation and partly overgrown with acacia. Having ascended about 2,500 feet from the level of the Gueba, we reached Dukwani after a march of ten hours from Abbi Addy.

April 6.—From Dukwani, where we had spent a cold windy night in the clouds, we descended easily to a plain. The village of Addy Gedaish is passed on the left, and for twenty minutes we were passing Addy Daro, a village a mile long, situated on the low table-land to the right of our path. After crossing the plain, in a diagonal direction, we climbed the side of a low hill, passed the village of Tashi, and for twenty-five minutes continued to march through the district of the same name. The adjoining district to Tashi is Ad'Zerghi. Two hours and a half from Dukwani, and from an elevation of about 8,000 feet, we had a fine view of the plain below us, and of the

villages of right and left Wazza to the south-west. We then followed the path along the edge of a giddy precipice to the Pass of Gergara, from which the village and church of Mariam Gergara are visible on a table-land below. We descended and crossed the Gergara table-land, and then again descended to the cultivated plain of Womberat. Our path led us in a south-easterly direction across the plain and through the priests' village of Ona Tekla Haimanot, a short distance beyond which we halted, near a stream of water and on good pasture.

After a rest we continued our march for some distance over a cultivated plain, which was succeeded by a tract of rich grazing land; then we proceeded up a well-watered valley, improved by artificial irrigation. At the head of this valley we saw camels, the first which we have met since we left Asmara; the Abyssinians buy them from the Danakils, and employ them to carry salt from the plain. Late in the afternoon we crossed a high pass, and came into view of the lofty mountains of Wojerat and the extensive intervening plain:

rather an appalling sight to one who has to cross both. We experienced a little rain and hail, and the thermometer fell several degrees; but we were let off lightly, as a heavy storm broke on the mountains behind us, and left them covered with hail which glistened brightly in the sunlight for a few minutes, and then melted away.

From the pass we had an execrable clamber over huge red boulders and rubble, and this culminated in a precipitous descent into a ravine, with a corresponding climb out of the same to our encampment on the side of the hill, on which the ruins of Antalo are situated.

April 7.—I remained at Antalo for the benefit of the market-day news. We had also heard that in consequence of the insecurity of the road, it would be safer to defer proceeding till after market-day, when a great company of merchants would proceed together, and so render themselves less liable to attack. Our soldier also stated that from Antalo to the lake we should be unable to obtain flour or forage, and therefore I decided to carry

enough to last us the four days which I expected to occupy in making the journey. Both these statements turned out to be perfectly untrue. For a long time the road has been safe, and the king's presence at Ashangi, entailing the constant passing and repassing of many soldiers, renders it at present perfectly secure. The Enderta country is one of the most fertile and thickly populated in Abyssinia, and through the mountainous district of Wojerat supplies were plentiful and easily obtained. I can only attribute these stories to an innate propensity for lying which the Abyssinians possess, and which they not infrequently use in the most objectless manner.

I visited the market, which was similar in all respects to that of Abbi Addy, a description of which I have already given. One elderly lady's curiosity was excited by the whiteness of the skin under my wrist, and she proceeded to touch it, observing that I had too much clothes on.

April 8.—Having commenced to prepare soon after 4 a.m., I hoped to have been on

the march an hour earlier than usual; but I find that, whether I begin early or late, I seldom succeed in starting before 6.30. Last night, not a few of my people drank rather more tedge than was good for them, and this morning some of them were not to be found when wanted. One man, who has been giving me considerable trouble lately, and whom I suspected of being dishonest, walked off with a great coat which I had lent to my servant. I sent some men into the village, and they captured him and recovered the coat; but I dismissed the man, who held a position of trust, on the spot. This threw the whole of my camp into the most intense excitement, as, with very few exceptions, all my men had lent him money in sums varying from 1 dollar to 32 dollars. After a time I succeeded in restoring order, and we marched off; the men wished to keep their debtor, in order to get what he was worth out of him. We were followed by several people from the town, one of them claiming to have lent the culprit clothing during the night, with which raiment he was walking off. My own people naturally

kept their man out of the hands of the townspeople, but as I considered that those from whom he had stolen had a prior claim to those who had lent or intrusted money to his care, of their own will, I ordered two men to seize him. I then caused him to be stripped of the stolen property, which I restored to its grateful owner. Later in the day I assessed his liabilities, which amounted to $74\frac{3}{4}$ dollars, his monthly wages being 6 dollars. As he had a balance of 8 dollars to his credit, I divided it out among his dupes.

From Antalo, three-quarters of an hour brought us to the plain, which we traversed easily and quickly, and crossed the Rivers Bouillé and Iverto. During our mid-day halt we had our almost daily ration of rain, and, as a special thing, a liberal allowance of hail, the stones of which were of considerable size and very hard.

The afternoon saw us on the road by which the English Expedition of 1868 marched through the country, and it being good, we got along considerably faster than the usual $2\frac{1}{2}$ miles an hour. Our path led up a lovely

valley, watered by a winding mountain torrent, which we crossed every few minutes. Suitable places for camping occurred frequently, so that we continued our march till I considered that we had gone far enough. At this season everything was bright and green, and I felt as if I could never tire of marching, where each turn in the road opened up some new and pleasant prospect, instead of the everlasting mimosa and acacia of the country through which we had been travelling so many days. We camped on an open grassy space near Beit Mariam.

April 9.—At 6 o'clock we marched, and soon passed the church of Beit Mariam. We had a pleasant climb over Alajie, which, though high, is not difficult of ascent, and our path led through pleasant places. From Alajie we descended to the Atsala Plain, where we rested awhile. A man passed us on the way to Makelleh; he asked me for an empty box in which to carry the bones of his brother to their native village. The idea of carrying empty boxes amused me rather, but I promised to give him one when I passed

PORTRAIT OF THE VIRGIN (BEIT MARIAM CHURCH).

through Makelleh on my way to the coast. In the afternoon we crossed the Debar Pass. Here we met a messenger who had come from the two Cossacks at Adowa with a message to the king, and was returning. We descended to Deba, and camped for the night near one of the king's chiefs who had marched with us during the latter part of the day. He had formerly been the king's cupbearer, and held that position when Admiral Sir William Hewett visited Adowa in 1884. He had since been wounded in an engagement under Ras Alula against Debbub, and, having been on sick leave in his own village, was returning to the king's camp.

April 10.—At 6 this morning we struck our camp, and marched in company with our friend of the previous afternoon. We continued on the road by which our troops marched against Theodore, and which lay chiefly through groves of fir-tree. The scenery was more suggestive to me of Canada than any other country I have visited. At 10 o'clock I halted to give my people an opportunity of making their bread, as I was advised

that on arrival in the king's camp we should be surrounded by soldiers and unable to settle down for some hours.

Yesterday and to-day we heard conflicting rumours as to the intended movements of the king, some people saying that in two days he would march for Makelleh, and others that he would remain at Ashangi until after Easter. However, as we neared his camp, all of whom we inquired assured us that the king would remain where he was till after Easter. From our halting-place I sent our soldiers on to announce my approach to Dejaj Tesemma, who was to be my balderabba, and to Lij Mesesha Worky, the king's English interpreter whom I had known at Adowa, and who will be remembered as one of the Abyssinian Envoys who visited London in 1885.

Soon after noon, having made our friendly chief a present, we continued our march, and I had the satisfaction of seeing many of the loads hooked on to the pack-saddles for the last time. About an hour later we arrived suddenly in sight of the king's camp and Lake

Ashangi. The lake is not impressive from its size, but is prettily situated in a basin formed by green hills on three sides and by a fertile sloping plain on the fourth.

As we neared the camp, which is very scattered, we were met by the soldier, whom I had sent on. He brought a message from the king, requesting me to come at once to him. The soldier added that the king had threatened to punish him, should he fail to bring me into camp that evening; but he begged me to wait a few minutes till an escort of 200 men should arrive to accompany me. The officers commanding the escort soon appeared, and informed me that they had been ordered to conduct me direct to the king. I had been rather apprehensive of this; but my interpreter, and the chief with whom I travelled, assured me that I should not be called till Monday, it being then Saturday afternoon. So I was obliged to change my clothes in the road, unpack the letters from Her Majesty and Lord Salisbury, and the swords for the king and his son. These proceedings entertained the soldiers greatly; I

don't know whether the rapid transformation in my own appearance, or the unpacking of the tin-lined case, containing the presents, pleased them the more. The large quantities of brown and other papers, which had to be extracted from the packing case before the swords were reached, raised their curiosity to a high pitch, which culminated when the handsome oak case with its silver mountings was withdrawn. As soon as I was ready, I abandoned the caravan, which had been the object of so many days' solicitude to me, to the care of the mule drivers, while I moved on with a few chosen attendants to the king's house. The soldiers took up a sort of formation, in the centre of which I and the persons who were intrusted to carry the presents rode. Thus we crossed a plain and climbed the hill on which the king is building a new palace. Here I was the beholden of many hundreds, as, having dismounted, I walked to the door of the circular, cone-roofed building in which His Majesty was seated. As I was about to enter I was abruptly stopped, because at the last moment

SEAL OF KING JOHN.

the king had sent for a chair for me which had not yet arrived. The chair was brought and placed with its back against the pole which supports the roof in the centre, and exactly facing the king. As usual, he was seated on an angareb, supported on either side by a large cushion. On my entering he extended his arm to its full length, and received me in the most cordial manner. At first I thought he was directing me to the chair, to which his outstretched hand was pointing; but I soon perceived his meaning, and having taken his hand and bowed, I presented Her Majesty's letter, enveloped in an embroidered cover which I had bought in Cairo, and which appropriately had a gold lion, resembling the king's seal, worked in the centre. Then I laid before the king the sword in its case, with the lid opened, and afterwards the sword for his son, Ras Aria Selassie. At the conclusion of the brief announcement with which I accompanied each presentation the king bowed and expressed his thanks. He then said that he had ordered a camp to be prepared for me,

and that I must go and rest. As I left, a salute of six guns was fired. Accompanied by my escort I went to my camp, which I found was in the enclosure of another of the king's houses, where I should be secure from the importunities to which I should have been exposed in an open camp. The Aboona was occupying the king's house in another division of the same enclosure. For myself I found a large but very thin tent pitched, furnished with an angareb, or native couch, covered with a carpet, and having on it the usual two large cushions. Other carpets were laid on the ground, and for some time I sat in state till my escort was marched off, and I was left only with the small guard, which would remain with me during my stay in the king's camp. A large black tent had been provided for the people of my caravan, who had all arrived, and we soon settled down, glad of the prospect of a week or ten days' rest.

My interpreter tells me that he has never known the king give so cordial a first reception, and that his message to hasten me

to his presence was an additional proof of his good feeling. This is due to the nature of my mission, which deals with no vexed questions or controversies so far as England is concerned. The king would also wish to show his gratification at receiving a letter and presents from Her Majesty, and he certainly could not have shown it in a more distinguished manner than he did in his reception of myself as the bearer of the Letter and Sword of Honour.

In the evening, presents of food, consisting of a cow, bread, ghee, tedge, red pepper, and firewood, arrived, and were continued regularly during the time I remained. Two fireplaces, and a spoon for my use, in accordance with the custom of the country, were lent from the king's house.

V.

MY SOJOURN AT THE KING'S COURT.

V.

MY SOJOURN AT THE KING'S COURT.

THE day after my arrival at my final camp being Sunday, afforded me an opportunity of resting from active exercise. The frequent potations of tedge which I had perforce consumed with my many inquisitive, begging visitors, had considerably unsettled my internal economy, so I was glad of the opportunity of devoting myself to my writing, an accumulation of which had to be got through. Tedge, the principal beverage of the country, is made by the fermentation of honey, water, and a plant called geesho. It varies much in quality and flavour, some being very pleasant, and others quite the reverse. On the arrival of visitors it is always brought in in gombos, or large earthen jars, whence it is poured into horn beakers for the use of the guests.

My enclosure was situated on an eminence overlooking the Lake Ashangi, which lay to the south-east. East of my hill was that on which the king was encamped, the distance between us permitting of my observing proceedings within the royal compound, and of being subjected to scrutiny myself. I first occupied myself in making my camp comfortable for man and beast. I pitched my Indian tent in such a way that I could walk from it into the large circular one which the king had provided for me. In the former was my bed and dressing paraphernalia, while in the latter I arranged a divan on which to sit when receiving formal visits, a writing-table, and a dining-table, both the latter being formed of biscuit boxes or empty cases. The king's rugs and carpets covered the ground, and though the transparency of the tent cloth scarcely diminished the power of the sun's rays, I managed, by lifting the curtain to admit the breeze, to keep my state apartment fairly cool during the hot part of the day. My sleeping tent, on the other hand, with its

double roof, was always cool in the day and warm at night. For the benefit of those who have had no experience in tents, and are called on to make a choice, I may repeat that the result of my varied experience is that the double-fly Indian mountain-tent is without a rival in every sample of weather, climate, or service. It keeps out the rain, wind, and sun, keeps in the warmth, is portable, easily pitched and struck, economical in regard to space, and evidently constructed on principles, the result of inventive genius, practical science, and diversified experience. During my first day I succeeded in settling myself down very comfortably, and I found that my men did the same, and apparently appreciated the prospect of a few days' rest as much as I did. When I came to look into the ailments of my beasts, I found that sore backs, though the order of the day, were not so severe as they certainly would have been had I exercised a less unremitting vigilance over the mules while on the march. I washed all the sores with carbolic soap, and turned the animals on to good grass, which

soon had the effect of making them healthy. Every night they were brought in, and picketed in the compound for safety, being let out in the morning to graze on the surrounding plain, under the care of one or two of my men by turns. The Abyssinians make considerable show of strictly observing times of fasting. Of these Lent is the principal, and it being now that season, the Abyssinians were supposed not to kill, or eat animal food. Notwithstanding that I was daily receiving presents of cows and sheep, I desired to respect and conform to the customs of the country, and so I abstained from slaughtering, and contented myself for some days with chicken in every form which the culinary knowledge of Mahomed, or my cook, could conceive. Safely enclosed in a stockaded compound, and shielded from the public gaze, I suppose that my men thought it would be safe to approach me on the subject of killing a cow. I received the deputation, and assented to their proposals, stipulating only, in the most matter-of-course manner, that, before killing, each mule driver

should provide and instruct a substitute, for I reminded them that the king had just returned from a punitive expedition against a Galla tribe who had been guilty of killing cattle during Lent, and I could not be certain that he would not kill them. This stipulation, and the serious manner of making it, damped my men's longing for butcher's meat, but I afterwards compromised matters, and rewarded their services by disposing of some sheep. Being still desirous of keeping on good terms with my own conscience, I agreed with Mahomed—who, not being a Christian, was not tied by the Abyssinian prejudices—that I would give him a sheep if he would give me a mutton chop. So I enjoyed my chop in the privacy of my tent, and reflected how little there was to choose, in point of humbug, between the Christian and the Mussulman, when stomach and soul met on the ground of conflicting interests.

Another day passed in cleaning up my clothes, saddlery, and transport equipment. A Greek doctor, by name Parissis, who was with the king, visited me, evidently with the

object of pumping me, but I carefully kept him at bay on the subject of the Italian occupation till I could gather from his remarks how the feeling ran within the king's house. We talked of European matters as well as our limited stock of Greek-French and British-French would permit. In the afternoon a tremendous storm of rain, hail, thunder, and lightning raged for an hour, flooding, even in that short space of time, all the low-lying land, and creating among the hills thousands of water-courses, flowing in every direction with the rapidity of mill-streams. After this had cleared off somewhat, I mounted my mule, and having assembled enough escort to invest my visit with some formality, I rode off to see Dejaj Tesemma, one of the officials of the Court with whom it was desirable to be on good terms. He was also a brother of Ras Alula. As I sat beside him on a rug, supported by pillows, I managed to leave a packet of a hundred dollars almost under him without any of his lynx-eyed satellites seeing the action. Having sown seed from which I

hoped to reap a crop of good offices in expediting my business, I rode down to the margin of the lake to knock over a few duck for the pot.

On the following day I expected to be summoned to the king's presence to discuss with him the political business on which I had come. But evidently he had not sufficiently got up his case to receive me yet awhile, for my hundred-dollar friend sent me word that the king was busy holding a council, and that I should be called to-morrow. However, later in the day I received a visit from the king's two English interpreters. These youths were educated at Bombay, and had been very friendly with all the members of the Hewett Mission. So I was glad to receive them with as much hospitality as I could dispense. They preferred my Scotch whiskey to their own tedge, so with that and some Navy biscuit we feasted and talked till they took their departure. Besides Abyssinian topics of conversation, I was able to inform them of the doings of their brother at school, at Carlton

Forehoe, in Norfolk. In the afternoon the weather became very threatening, but the rain held off, and we escaped with a little thunder and lightning, though, no doubt, a storm similar to that of yesterday broke somewhere not very distant. My valuable map, more useful to me than a dozen rascally guides, was in a terrible state of dilapidation, so I spent some hours mending it with the only material at my disposal—the white of egg and the margins of an old newspaper; but directly I attempted to fold it, it all fell to pieces again. I tried again with acacia gum, but for some reason which I couldn't fathom, the gum seemed no more adhesive than the egg.

I expressed a half-intention of buying a horse, if only for the sake of an occasional gallop about the surrounding plains during my sojourn at Ashangi. From that time till my departure a constant stream of horses were being led into my compound for inspection, trial, and hoped-for purchase. The price of these animals, which were rough but useful country-bred beasts, ranged at

about sixteen to twenty dollars — cheap enough, if only for the exercise. But I knew that the king would give me a better one than I could buy, so I contented myself with trying all which were brought me, and so got some good rough experience. The Abyssinians ride entirely with a loose seat, the big toes thrust into small iron stirrups. The saddle, which fits the horse's back like an inverted V, has a high pommel and cantle, its wooden framework being bound together by hide thongs. I induced these accomplished horsemen to ride my saddle, thinking that they would find a difficulty at first, but they rode with as much ease and confidence as on their own. I also could ride their saddles, but they were certainly not comfortable. My bridle had only a powerful twisted Pelham, so the Abyssinians missed the power which their terrible Arab bit gives them over a horse.

Although, of course, the days were intensely hot, and the heat dry and scorching, this was far preferable to the damp heat of the coast. The nights were cold, the ther-

mometer usually registering a minimum of 52 degrees Fahrenheit.

Another day arrived, and again the Abyssinian motto "to-morrow" was announced for my visit to the king; this was getting somewhat exasperating, and I saw every prospect of an unlimited detention if I allowed it to go on. True, my days were well occupied in writing, and looking after the wants of my men and animals, and in attending to the duties of my camp and caravan stores; but the work of my mission did not progress, and I began to long for a return to civilization, and the companionship of my own countrymen. So I got hold of one of the king's people and decidedly announced my intention of starting on Sunday, the 18th, it being then Wednesday, the 14th of April. This I knew would reach the king's ears, and might induce him to accord me an early interview. At one time, I regarded these daily postponements as indications of the fact that since the Italian occupation of Massowah an Englishman was not so entirely the *personâ grata* that he had

been before that event. However, I think, from subsequent events, that that was not the case, at least so far as the king was concerned.

Another day, and I was re-subjected to the pumping process, this time by Lij John, one of the interpreters already spoken of. From him I heard that the king had only that day learned of the postponement of the Italian Mission, so here was one reason for his procrastination in receiving me. Doubtless he had intended to confront us one with another, and had hoped by so doing to fix the responsibility for the occupation of Massowah on England or on Italy herself. As this was no longer possible, I might expect to be received shortly. After Lij John had left me, I rode to return the visit of the Greek doctor. He was indisposed, so I did not see him. I met a Greek armourer, however, who had just arrived from the province of Shoa, and who had been resident for some years in Abyssinia. After this I paid a visit to the Aboona, or Coptic High Priest. Mahomed here

became my interpreter, as the conversation was carried on in Arabic. The holy man continued to count his beads as we conversed. He expressed great surprise at my intention of returning to the coast so soon, for he had supposed that I should remain in the country for at least three months, that is till after the season of rains should be over. What object, beyond getting all that was possible out of me, the people could have had in endeavouring to persuade me to remain among them, I know not; but many were the efforts made to deter me from an immediate return. I turned a deaf ear to the numerous stories about the dangers of travelling during the rains, just as I had done before starting from Massowah. While visiting the Aboona, the wailings of many pilgrims without his gates made the very air melancholy. The crowd chiefly consisted of young men aspiring to the priesthood, and waiting the pleasure of the high priest for their ordination; but beggars, lepers, criminals, and pilgrims, all mingled in a motley group. Truly, as I rode through them, my whole

being, mental and bodily, turned sick. for in Abyssinia no hospitals or asylums exist to receive within their doors, and so hide from the eyes of the world, the hideous monstrosities, freaks of nature, loathsome masses of disease, such as there occasionally meet one's gaze by the roadside, but here were collected together in great numbers, waiting on the pleasure of a being as powerless to help them either in body, soul, or spirit, as were the stones on which they stood. The trust reposed in the priesthood results in the whole country being priest-ridden to an extraordinary degree. In Gondar, which was the old capital, founded three centuries ago by the Portuguese, there are forty-four churches. To some of these churches as *few* as 40 priests belong, to others as many as 160, while the church of the Holy Trinity at Adowa, the present capital, has 370 priests on its staff. There are abbots of various grades, men of some standing and importance, but many hundreds of the clergy are of a very low class, whose only occupation is begging.

The following afternoon was marked by a more than ordinarily tremendous downpour of rain, lasting from 2.30 till 8. If such is the dry season, what must the wet be like? The latter sets in concurrently with break of the S.W. monsoon. From that time the country becomes, according to the accounts of many travellers, almost impassable. The rivulets are swollen into torrents, along which the current rushes with such rapidity that mules are barely able to maintain their foothold when fording streams of not more than two feet in depth, and many lives are lost in attempts to cross the larger streams, such as the Takazze. In the clay districts the ground becomes greasy and slippery till progress is only made by prolonged struggling. As to the Takazze itself during the wet season, Bruce, a former traveller, says that it carries in its bed about one-third of all the water that falls in Abyssinia. He observed the mark of the previous year's inundation to be eighteen feet above the mean level, and adds that "this prodigious body of water

PICTURE OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

passing furiously from a high ground in a very steep descent, tearing up rocks and large trees in its course and forcing down their broken fragments on its stream, with a noise like thunder echoed from a hundred hills, very naturally suggests an idea that under these circumstances it is very rightly called the 'Terrible.' But then it must be considered that all rivers at the same time equally overflow." During the dry season the Takazze is described as being about two hundred yards in width, three feet in depth, and running swiftly but clearly. Between March and November it is death to sleep in the adjoining country; the whole of the inhabitants therefore retire to the tops of the neighbouring mountains. The river teams with fish, and crocodiles who prey upon the fish. Speaking of the crocodile, Father Lobo, a Portuguese missionary in the seventeenth century, says: "Neither I, nor any with whom I have conversed, have ever seen him weep, therefore I take the liberty of ranking all that hath been told us about his tears among the fables which are only proper to amuse children."

I realized that it is a long lane that has no turning, when exactly a week after my arrival in the king's camp His Majesty summoned me for the purpose of discussing business. I had, after all, only been experiencing such delays as my previous knowledge of the Abyssinians had taught me to expect. With them dignity, and a very leisurely mode of proceeding, are inseparable; moreover, it had been hinted to me that the king wished to bestow on me special marks of distinction, the apparel and insignia of which required some little time to manufacture. In vain did I protest that I was by far too small a bug to be the recipient of honours equal to those which had been bestowed upon my chief on a previous occasion. Rather, however, than openly tell me of the preparations which were being made for my honour, the king's people temporized upon every other excuse possible. At last, as I have said, the summons arrived. Arraying myself in such finery as I had been able conveniently to carry with me, I started for the king's hut,

accompanied by a large escort. My "full dress" kit would hardly have passed muster under the eyes of the most lenient admiral on the list. It consisted of an ordinary white tropical helmet, pipeclayed for the occasion; an old serge tunic, decorated with epaulettes and full-size medals, &c.; white corduroy riding-breeches; brown field boots beeswaxed to a high state of polish; sword, and fly-whisk. When I had approached the king's enclosure as nearly as etiquette permitted, I dismounted, and having walked through the outer enclosure, I entered the hut. This was constructed of light poles, placed close to one another, and forming a circle of about forty feet in diameter. These were interlaced with twigs, and roofed in by thatch. An inner circle of poles, in open order, supported the roof. The hut was adjoined by two annexes. I was told that one was the king's retiring-room, while the occasional tinkling which proceeded from the other, informed me that the king's favourite horse and mule had their abode therein. Close to the door of

the royal drawing-room was placed the divan on which the king was seated. On pillows at his side were his weapons, conspicuous among them being the sword of honour with which I had so recently presented him on behalf of Her Majesty the Queen. The king received me with marked courtesy. The chief article of dress in Abyssinia is a shawl of white cotton material, usually with a broad red stripe up the middle. On state occasions, and in the dress of the nobles, the red stripe is replaced by one of silk embroidery, beautifully designed, and laboriously worked by hand. This garment is made the medium for the expression of many grades and degrees of sentiment. Frigid reserve, antagonistic feelings or intentions, an overwhelming superiority, are manifested by the shawl being drawn right across the face just below the eyes, and so hiding nose, mouth, and chin. As these feelings are lessened, or supplanted by opposite ones, so the shawl is lowered, more or less ; complete cordiality, confidence, and "hail fellow, well met," being expressed by the shawl lying

folds around the waist, as the dignitary sits Turkish fashion on his divan. In this way did the king receive me, and I knew at once that, however difficult might be questions which he had determined to discuss with me, they would be free from any personal animosity so far as I was concerned. And so, except for occasional interruptions from the tinkling of the mule-bell, which the king ordered to be removed when he saw that it attracted my attention, the interview passed off pleasantly. At its termination, the king promised to write a letter for me to take to my Queen, and to let me start on the morrow. Just as I quitted the royal presence, my interpreter was recalled. I was curious to know the reason, and the old man told me that the king had asked him whether I was a general. This answered in the negative, His Majesty was pleased to remark that he liked the English manner of conducting business, observing that I spoke quietly, and did not gesticulate or excite myself. He said that had I been a * * * * * man, I should have shouted and made

wild motions, and when walking into or out of the hut should have banged my sword on the ground, &c., &c., &c. I could not but feel pleased that my demeanour had been agreeable to the king, though I had hardly given him credit for such discrimination between the various classes of Europeans, as his remarks betrayed. Johannis had altered not a whit during the two years which had elapsed since I last saw him, although he had gone through much adventure in the interim. Indeed, he can have altered but very little since Lord Napier of Magdala placed him on the throne in 1868, for a portrait of him which appeared in *The Illustrated London News* of that year, and which was reproduced in 1884 *à propos* of Sir William Hewett's mission, was still a striking and faithful likeness. Actually about fifty years of age, his lithe frame, keen eye, and quick intelligent expression, are more those of a man twenty years younger. When speaking to one, through an interpreter, he lowers his eyelids till his words are repeated to his visitor

JOHANNIS, KING OF ABYSSINIA, 1868–1889.

whom he then fixedly regards, undoubtedly often divining the coming answer from the expressions produced by his own remarks on the face of him to whom he is talking. Unless his own rejoinder is ready to his lips, he pauses between each question, usually resting his chin in the palm of his hand, while all the animation dies out of his face as he considers his next question. At such moments one might suppose that he had nothing more to say. In character he may be cruel, but probably not more so than the generality of his subjects, nor than the exigencies of a barbaric rule over a wild and yet cunning race compel. I have never seen him standing, but I should judge that he is about five feet six inches in height. He is held in great awe by his subjects, from the highest to the lowest. His supremacy, bravery, and success as a conqueror and ruler are undisputed, except by the warlike Gallas, and the boastful, but really submissive, Menelek, King of Shoa.

But to return to myself. The rest of the day, that is from about 9 a.m., was employed

by me in committing to paper, for my despatches, the details of the recent interview, and in preparing, so far as possible, for the homeward march which I hoped to commence on the morrow. My beasts were now all in first-rate condition, and appeared to be tired of their idle life, which is more than I could say as regards my men. Abyssinian to the backbone, they appeared to find perfect contentment in eating, and squatting about talking to, or looking at, one another. From their light-hearted laughter I always supposed that their conversation must be of a frivolous order, and under these circumstances I had no apprehensions of anything worse at their hands than peculation. To do them justice, they did not indulge in this national misdemeanour to any appreciable extent, and in fact, out of about £300 worth of camp and transport gear, I only really lost about seven shillings'-worth during the whole of my march. The articles which constituted this loss may easily have been dropped by the wayside during the many days of toilsome and rough travelling which we underwent. To me, my

men were always respectful, and would always stand up on my approach. Although at times, necessity compelled me to be strict and exacting, I invariably took care to acknowledge, in one way or another, my appreciation of their enforced efforts, and when circumstances admitted, I showed them extra consideration in the matter of rest, food, or assistance when sick. Their faith in my integrity, as regards their pay and rations, was unbounded, and bad as may be the Abyssinian character in some respects, and according to our standard of morals, I am bound to say that for cheerful behaviour, under trying circumstances, the Abyssinians are not to be matched by any native race, of equal intelligence, with which I am acquainted. The toiling negro may outrival them in some respects, but he has less heart, and sickens to death under adversity.

On the morning of Sunday, the 18th of April, I was up betimes in expectation of the promised summons to my final interview with the king. In the middle of the forenoon, however, there arrived at my tent the king's

two interpreters and his secretary. Now this self-same secretary was a highly bibulous person, who had done much to instigate antagonism against the proposals which eventually constituted the terms of the Hewett Treaty. On that occasion, unfortunately, I had given him liquor in the hopes of inducing him to stay with me and work steadily through the treaty. It had not occurred to me, as was the case, that he might be already fairly tipsy. His obstreperous behaviour nearly brought about a final collapse of the projects of the mission, entailing further discussions and delays. So I intended to profit by past experience, and resolved to lead him gently on by harmless doses to the end. Our object was to translate, together, so that there might be no misunderstanding as to meanings, the draft of the letter which the king wished me to convey to Queen Victoria. We worked steadily and smoothly on, till we came to a passage in which King Johannis expressed his thanks "for the sword which he had received and for that which would be sent

when it was finished." It took many and long arguments to convince the three Abyssinians that the letter from the Queen, saying that a sword would be sent, and the later one from Lord Salisbury, saying that it was now sent, referred to one and the same sword. For some time they could not see it, and then when they could, they would not. The fact of the matter was that they were responsible for the king's misunderstanding on this point, since, when translating these letters to him, they had not made it appear, as was the case, that one was of a later date than the other. Eventually I compelled them, as I hoped, to go to the king, explain the mistake, and obtain his sanction to a slight alteration in his draft. This they left my camp promising to do; but I had my suspicions as to their intentions. As the day wore on and the interpreters did not return, I felt convinced that they would never, of their own accord, face the king with the explanation on which I insisted, as necessary to prevent disappointment in the future. Foreseeing that the delay might be prolonged, and that I should

be prevented from departing on the following day, if I did not hasten matters a little, I ordered my mule to be brought from the plain, and prepared myself for a visit to the king. In vain did my interpreter and the chief of my escort protest the danger of such an undertaking. I was ready before my mule arrived, so I started on foot, accompanied by old Bru and my escort, the chief of which was mounted. He civilly offered me the use of his animal, but the distance was not great, so I walked, Bru panting along by my side, entreating me to desist from my purpose. Arrived at the outer gate of the king's enclosure, I requested admittance. This being refused, I endeavoured, unsuccessfully, to throw back the wooden bolt by putting my arm through the openings in the gate. The chiefs who were assembled in the outer courtyard said that the king was asleep, that he was ill, having fallen from his horse, that it was Sunday, &c. Finding that they would not admit me, and feeling certain of a welcome from the king, I unbuckled my sword, and tossing it to my weeping inter-

preter, I scaled the gate and sat on the top. At this, the crowd of some 200 people, whom my appearance had attracted, took fright for themselves and fled down the hill-side, fully expecting the king to come out and issue orders for a general massacre. Young Kassa, of all my own people, alone stood firm and calm. Looking down from the top of the gate upon the chiefs inside the stockade, I informed them that it was my intention to remain where I was, if I remained all night, till they told the king that I had important things to say to him. Eventually they were persuaded to tell the king, who immediately ordered me to be admitted. Once inside, those who had been loudest in prohibitions, and abuse against me, now became most servile, kneeling to kiss my boots, and repeating, "Don't be angry with us; don't hate us; don't tell the king!" Having gained my point, I of course had no wish to stir up strife, and so said little to the king as to the obstruction which I had experienced. Shaking hands with His Majesty, I apologized for troubling him on

Sunday, especially as I had been told that he was ill, and sleeping; but the urgency of my business, and the necessity of departing on the morrow to catch the steamer at Massowah with His Majesty's letter, compelled me to intrude. The king was quite civil, and said that he had not been sleeping, nor was he ill, beyond something the matter with one finger. I examined the royal hand, made a few sympathetic suggestions, and then proceeded to business. The king readily grasped the situation, and immediately sent for his secretary and interpreters. The former arrived after some delay, and on entering made so low a bow that his head nearly touched the ground, on which a second later he rolled helplessly, hopelessly drunk. The king, recognizing what was undoubtedly a characteristic failing in his secretary, had him removed. Then one of the interpreters entered, trembling in every limb, till I assured him *sotto voce* that I had explained all, and that the king did not seem to mind. Having obtained the necessary permission to amend the letter, I induced the interpreter to return

to my camp with me and complete the translation. As I quitted the king's enclosure the chiefs begged a thousand pardons, which I cheerfully granted, glad in my innermost heart at the success of what, in my cooler frame of mind, I was forced to admit might have ended in a very different manner. The king's friendship for me, and my apparent influence with him, assured for me an increased measure of respect after this incident. Old Bru was now full of joyful congratulations. No doubt, much of his fear arose from a suspicion that any misbehaviour on my part would be set down against him, and might bring him into disrepute in high quarters, for he was a man of good connections in the country. The king's interpreter promised me that the secretary should be set to work as soon as he became sober enough, in order that I might come to the king to receive the letter on the following morning, and take my departure,—indeed the king had arranged this during my visit to him that afternoon. So I concluded the day with all possible preparations for marching on the following morning.

VI.

JOURNEY TO THE COAST, BY WAY OF CHELICUT, ADEGRAT, AND ASMARA.

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April 19.—At 7 o'clock in the morning the king sent for me; and after a short conversation, I was led out from the royal presence and conducted down a precipitous bank to a black and very hot tent. Herein were arranged all the insignia of the honours about to be bestowed on me. Having divested myself of my uniform coat, I thrust my legs, clothed in a pair of field-boots and velvet cord riding-breeches, into a pair of capacious pantaloons of French silk, profusely embroidered in gold and lined with red. A silk shirt, also embroidered in gold and lined with red, was then put over me and confined at the waist with a silk wrapper. Next came a "merghaf" or "shamma" of delicate texture, and over this, in the form of a cape, came a lion's mane, which had

hitherto been worn by the regal donor of all this splendour. By this time I found it rather difficult to move or breathe, and my discomforts were added to by a heavy silver-gilt armlet which was buckled on my right forearm. On my left arm was hung a rhinoceros-hide shield, covered in dark-blue silk, and ornamented with silver and silver-gilt, while into my now almost powerless hand were thrust two inconveniently long spears. A gold ornament, the badge of the "Order of Solomon," consisting of two triangles and a cross, set with red, green, and violet glass, was hung round my neck, and I was led forth from the tent. Outside I found a gaily-trapped horse and mule — I believe "richly caparisoned" is the correct term— awaiting me. These two animals were led before me till I reached the courtyard of the king's palatial hut. I was then requested to lead the horse to the door of the hut and bow to His Majesty the King of Zion, the King of Kings of Ethiopia. This feat I succeeded in accomplishing to the intense admiration of a select company

of spectators. Transferring the horse to the care of my groom, and the other incumbrances, such as spears and shield, to my servant, I entered the king's presence and shook hands. By this time I was in a profuse perspiration, which will not be considered remarkable when I recall the fact that I had on nearly two complete suits of clothing and a lion-skin surtout, a warm garment in itself. I have omitted to mention that a sword had been rigidly strapped to my waist on the right side, which made the feat of sitting down one of some difficulty; but everything seemed destined to go off swimmingly with me, and I triumphed even over this. A few compliments, many expressions of goodwill and friendship between the Monarch of Zion and myself, and we parted. The entranced spectators, my interpreter told me, all agreed that I was made to wear such raiment. They always say that—sometimes it is productive of Maria Theresa dollars; but it was with heartfelt gratitude that I reflected that I should not be made to wear it much

longer. It is not easy to mount a horse in this fearful and wonderful attire. To begin with, on account of your sword being strapped to the right side, you must mount on the off-side; but that is a trifling difficulty compared to that experienced in getting the toe of a broad-soled boot into a stirrup designed only to receive the big toe of a bare foot. Then the roomy capacity of the pantaloons, and the quantity of drapery in the shirt, which reached below the knees, all tended to prevent one getting one's leg gracefully over a saddle with a high cantle. However, I surmounted this difficulty, and eventually reached my camp, and speedily divested myself of my finery, which left its ruddy dye on my European costume. A hurried distribution of backsheesh, and at noon I was off, homeward bound, with a comparatively light heart and a splitting headache. Of course the day was spoilt for marching, but I got six hours out of it, and reached the old camping-place from which I had marched on my last day's outward-bound journey.

April 20.—Invigorated by the knowledge that I was on my way home, and to the company of men of my own colour, I marched soon after daybreak, and an hour later was crossing the lofty Pass of Debar, a biting cold wind at my back. Alajie came in sight, like an old and welcome friend. Having traversed the intervening valleys, I left him behind not long after noon, and after rather more than nine hours' march I camped on the plain which stretches away from his foot to the northward for miles. Tired by so much ascending and descending, I dined at 7, and was asleep by 8.30, though, as a matter of fact, that is generally the case whether the day's march has been long or short.

April 21.—At 4 o'clock this morning I was awakened by a great deal of noise and excitement. This was occasioned by an enterprising jackal, who had stolen his way into the camp, and walked off with the skin of a recently-killed sheep. He was soon discovered, and much excitement prevailed, in the midst of which one man,

hastily snatching up a spear with which to chase the thief, ran the blade into the neck of my tent-boy, fortunately inflicting little harm. I treated this case with lint, vaseline, and a bandage. The piece of lint worked round to the back of the neck, but the boy contentedly wore it there for two days, and I then pronounced him well and took it off. As the remedy did not remain within six inches of the wound for more than five minutes, I think that faith in my skill as a "hakim" must have done more to ensure a cure than the actual medicaments, excellent of their kind though they doubtless were.

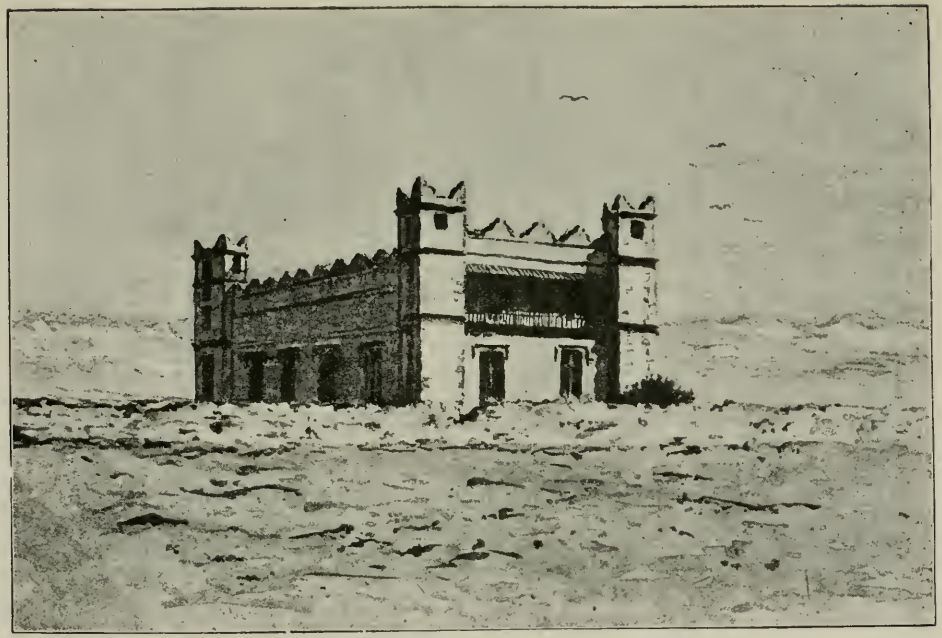
It is unnecessary for me to give a detailed description of the road from the Lake to Senafe, as I marched by the road traversed by our troops in 1868, and there is an accurate description published by the War Office, the existence of which renders any description by me superfluous. I may say, however, that from Ashangi to Asmara the road is, almost without exception, easy, and should be selected as far as possible by travellers

proceeding to any part of Abyssinia, so long as it can be made to serve their purpose.

I reached Chelicut in the evening, and camped near the church. I was hospitably received by the head priest, who brought a considerable quantity of food for myself and my people, and told me that he had been ordered to treat me as the king's friend.

April 22.—The king had directed that I should go to Makelleh, where Naretti has just completed his new palace. Although this caused a slight deviation from the direct road, I was glad of the opportunity of seeing the palace, of which I had heard a great deal. On leaving Chelicut we wound our way up a partly cultivated valley, which led us to the foot of a hill, which we climbed. The road was easy, and after three hours' march we came suddenly in view of the low-lying plain on which Makelleh and numerous other villages are situated. The new palace caught my eye at once, as it stands conspicuously out among the rude Abyssinian huts of the village. It looks like an old-fashioned Eng-

lish church, with castellated turrets at either corner, those at the extremities of the north façade being considerably higher than the other two. On descending to the plain I was met by a representative of the chief, Balgadda Kassa, who had been directed to extend his hospitality to me. However, I camped in the courtyard of Naretti's house. I paid a visit to the palace, and was very much impressed by all I saw, when I considered that it was the work of one man. The masonry, it is true, had been actually built by natives, under the unceasing superintendence of Naretti ; but the woodwork was entirely the production of his own hands. From first to last, the architect and builder had executed his work in a most solid and thorough manner, and had not taken advantage of the ignorance of the Abyssinians. The basement, which is entered by a heavy double door of Abyssinian wood, forms a banqueting hall, the ceiling of which is supported by solid, well-founded columns of masonry. Leading out of this hall, which occupies the whole of the nave of the build-



KING JOHN'S NEW PALACE AT MAKELLEH.

ing, is a large audience or council chamber under the deep façade. From the basement one ascends by a double flight of broad, well-built stairs, such as one finds in old English houses.

On the first floor are a number of apartments of various sizes, all well lighted and airy, and the roof forms a fine promenade, from which an extensive panoramic view of the surrounding country is obtained, while the turret at each corner, and the castellated parapet which surrounds the promenade, have all been designed with a view to the defence of the building. The king has yet to overcome a dislike to going upstairs, but this I imagine he will accomplish in a very short time. It is to be hoped that this fine building will induce the Abyssinians to improve their architecture, and style of living generally.

Naretti told me that the labourers who assisted in building the palace manifested much curiosity as to the use of cupboards and other domestic offices, and I fear that the king will content himself with putting

an angareb at one end of one of the rooms, and will continue to live as he does at present, in barbaric state. His object in building the palace is more to perpetuate his name, than with any idea of instituting a new order of things in his realm.

In the evening I paid a visit to Balgadda Kassa, and found him in a fine large hut, with a lofty dome-shaped roof beautifully thatched, and ornamented with rope covered in red, white, and blue material. He was assembled with all his officers to receive me, and had prepared his house for my reception. It was cleaner even than the king's, and some undoubtedly valuable rugs and carpets were spread for me to walk on to the angareb on which I was to sit. We talked and consumed tedge for a long time. Kassa made frequent inquiries after many acquaintances whom he had known in 1868, and we parted the best of friends, soon after dark.

April 23.—Before 6 o'clock this morning I was on the march. I rode up to take leave of Kassa, who sent a few soldiers, and

Naretti also accompanied me for a short distance. Four hours after leaving Makelleh I came upon some wells at the spot where my road joined that by which the English travelled. Three hours from these wells is the village of Agula. Here the Alaca came out to greet me, and was most anxious that I should remain at his village and give him an opportunity of displaying the hospitality which the king had ordered him to accord to me. As the day was yet young, I could not consent to this, so with many expressions of gratitude I informed the kind old man that I must go on; but he insisted on sending a man to drive on some sheep which he had presented to me. Three hours from Agula I found the entrance to the Dongola defile, and here I halted by some water, and near the church of Mariam W'oggara, which is carved in the rock, and reputed to have been made by God.

April 24.—I marched this morning as usual, and after four hours and a half I halted for breakfast. I was soon interrupted by the arrival of Dejaj Tedela, the chief of

the extensive district in which I passed last night. He was accompanied by soldiers, and all were mounted on fine horses. The Dejaj expressed his regret that we had not met last night. He had heard from the king of my approach, but had not expected me to arrive so quickly. He brought two horns of tedge, one of a superior kind. As I was very parched, we sat under the shade of a waterproof sheet, hauled out to four spears stuck in the ground, and enjoyed the tedge considerably. Tedela was the most pleasant man I had met, and he was well known to my interpreter, who gave him a high character, which his looks and manner well bore out. I wished to feed his horses, as all my own mules were enjoying their mid-day corn, but this he would not hear of. The Dejaj had recently been thrown from his horse, and suffered from the effects in such a way that it was necessary for two or three of his attendants to clasp him very tightly round the body and bend his back straight at intervals of about fifteen minutes. This operation appeared to give him consider-

able pain, which he bore with great fortitude.

When it became necessary for me to continue my journey we parted, and though I seldom quitted a place or person with regret on my homeward journey, I certainly hoped that I might some day have the pleasure of seeing Dejaj Tedela again.

I continued my march for five hours through the Aguddi district, but failed to fix the position at which I arrived with any accuracy.

April 25.—Being Easter Day, my men petitioned me not to march ; but I calculated that I could not afford to lose a day if I wished to catch a steamer which I knew would be due to leave Massowah early in May. I, however, contented myself with a short march of seven hours, and camped at Adegrat. Hardly was my tent pitched when down came a heavy storm. The wind threatened to uproot and bear away my tent, while the rain descended in such torrents that I was flooded before I had time to dig a trench.

This position, which otherwise would have been a melancholy one, was rendered rather exciting by the deafening thunder crashes which succeeded each brilliant flash of lightning. After an hour and a half the weather cleared up, and as I was camped on high, sandy ground, I was soon put to rights. The Tigrians, and notably the people of Adegrat, have a reputation for inhospitality. Now, on this occasion, instructions had been received from the king to provide me with a certain quantity of food and forage, and though the deputy-chief—the headman being away—did not actually treat me inhospitably, he halved my allowance, and withheld the cow which I had been promised on Easter Day. However, as I had more than enough already, I passed all this over in silence.

April 26.—This morning I took a not over fervid leave of the chief of the village, and marched soon after 6 o'clock. At the last moment the chief's heart failed him, and he judged, from my not giving him money when I left, that I knew I had

not received the treatment that was due. So he hurried after me and beseeched me to take a cow, but this I declined to do, at which he and all his people became considerably alarmed for the consequences, though, as I had no intention of complaining against them, their fears were groundless, if well-deserved. This chief's presents to me had consisted of new, and therefore unripe tedge, waxy honey, and bad beer, all of which had been accompanied by profuse assurances that they were of the best, and not bought in the market, but brought from his own house.

My march to-day was along a very winding path, round Fogarda, where our army had a camp, and, I believe, wells. My eyes were ever fixed on the peaks of Senafe, which I looked upon as landmarks denoting my near approach to home. After my weary, and often anxious, absence from the company of my fellow-men, I was as glad to see these peaks as the homeward-bound sailor is to descry the cliffs of his native land.

Heavy threatening rainclouds had hovered overhead all day, so at half-past four, after rather over eight hours' march, I camped, I knew not where, in a hollow near some water, but I judged that I was about eleven miles south-west of Senafe. I had just pitched my camp and got under shelter when down came the rain in torrents, and it continued to come down until early next morning.

April 27.—Four hours from my last night's camp I reached Senafe Mountain, and an hour and a quarter later I halted at the village of the same name for breakfast. I had taken a shorter cut than that which the English road takes. The two roads united at Behat, which is about two hours' march before Senafe village. The road from Senafe to Tohonda is frequently infested by robbers, and is one much dreaded by native merchants. But I considered that my caravan was strong enough to dissuade any one so intended from an attack, though, had such an attack been made, I do not think we could have repelled it

with one pistol and a 12-bore gun. However, the headman of Senafe volunteered to guide us through the thickly-wooded labyrinth which had to be traversed. Leaving Senafe at 2 o'clock, we almost immediately passed the head of the descent by which our troops returned to Annesley Bay, and, from here to Gura, as the road is good, and one which travellers will do well to follow, I will give a description of it. The path ascended, rather precipitously, the side of an amba, round the head of which it wound, and then crossed a series of hills and valleys. On either hand is a perfect wilderness of olive trees and dead acacias, overgrown with moss and dry creepers. I found the path better than I had been led to expect, as Ras Alula has lately cleared it of obstructions, and in many places it is so broad and level, that one might with ease and safety drive a coach and four along it. About three hours from Senafe the path touches the head of a precipitous gorge, which opens out till it becomes a broad, wall-sided valley, through

which a low and fertile plain is visible. Here, also, on the high land, cultivated ground is again reached, and after crossing an intervening valley, we arrived at Tohonda, four hours and a quarter from Senafe. I camped on the hillside, and, according to routine, down came the rain; but I was pleasantly occupied in my tent writing a letter to the Italian General at Massowah to announce my approaching return, and the fact that I hoped to hear his band on Sunday evening next. Then I turned in, but the relentless rain came down steadily, and with a tedious persistency which drove sleep away till 2 o'clock in the morning.

April 28.—My poor men were all so miserably soaked through and shivering when I turned out this morning, that I had to accede to their modest request to give them an hour to light fires to warm themselves, and to make bread, which they had been unable to do last night.

I despatched my letter by a Shoho, and, having engaged another to guide me to

Gura, I marched in good spirits, despite my cold, wet clothes and boots.

For an hour after leaving Tohonda the road lies over a succession of low hills and valleys, until a table-land is reached, which is crossed. On the northern edge of this table-land, an hour and a half's journey from Tohonda, is the village of Zivan Zigib. From there the road takes a north-west direction over a stretch of cultivated land, till another ascent is made over a number of hills composed of sandstone and quartz. The village of Abba Salama is reached after nearly three hours' march from Tohonda. Descending from Abba Salama one crosses a tract of grass and arable land, and after another climb a pass is arrived at from which a good view of the low-lying districts around Gura is obtained. Then follows a stretch of desert in which nothing but the thorny acacia is seen. The path winds along the bed of a tributary of the Mai Serawe until that stream itself is reached. By taking this road instead of that through Dixa, a heavy

climb is avoided, and the distance is considerably shortened ; but it should only be attempted with a guide. From the Mai Serawe the country was more cultivated, and we wound our way through a narrow valley, on reaching the head of which we commenced to descend in the direction of a range of hills which we must cross to-morrow. During the afternoon we saw a number of wolves, which had recently caused great consternation among the flocks of sheep and goats which were quietly grazing in the vicinity. Now, however, the wolves were in full flight before a number of agile Abyssinians, armed with spears and shields.

As the day began to close in, I camped near a river-bed at a short distance from Adi-Berakit, and again the rain, which had been coming down in moderation for the last four hours, poured forth its deluge. For some minutes a heavy shower of hail descended, accompanied as usual by much thunder and lightning, and then it settled down steadily for the night.

April 29.—At 4 a.m., when I came out of my tent, a bleary spot marked the place where the moon would have been if the rain had not washed her away. It required some energy on my part to induce my men to light fires and dry themselves, but by a quarter to seven I was on the march over a good road through the district of Maretta Saveny, which comprises nine or ten villages.

At eight we reached a stream of good water in a deep but narrow valley, on the other side of which was the village of Enda Mariam Maihai. From there a very gradual descent over cultivated land led us to a narrow defile between some rocks, from which the villages of Inadotta and Gura can be seen on adjoining hills. At 9.30 we passed through Inadotta, and then along a good sandy road which skirts the sides of the hills bounding the Plain of Gura on the east, till, gradually descending, it reaches the plain, and then continues first in a northerly and then in a westerly direction, close to the hill held by the

Egyptians in their conflicts against the Abyssinians. Having passed the Kyakhor road, and arrived at Addi Dak Amhari, I halted for my mid-day rest, and shortly after resuming my march I arrived on the road which I had left on my outward journey between Addi Hawisha and Gura. Near the water beyond Woghartie we camped for the night.

April 30. — Instead of the miserable weather experienced during the past few nights, we had a fine, dewy night, succeeded by a bright, cold morning. We were on the march before six. The road was thickly strewed with the long wings of a peculiar kind of beetle; these, covered in dew, sparkled in the bright morning sunlight as brilliantly as diamonds. Five hours brought us to Asmara, where I found a number of doubtful Greek characters, Ras Alula having gone to the king. I also met a German who has been resident at Adowa for some time. He told my interpreter that he had taken a number of flour-mills into the country. I remarked

that I thought that would hardly pay, as the Abyssinians would continue to use their stone mills; but he said that he had found something which would make it worth his while. I therefore conjectured that he was looking for gold, and that his so-called corn-mills were quartz crushers. I afterwards learned from an official, who had seen the machinery in the custom-house at Massowah, that I was right in my conjecture.

The Emir of Kassala's headless trunk was still spinning in the wind, suspended from its gibbet.

My early arrival at Asmara gave my people time to make a feast-day of it, and to lay in stores for the journey to the coast, none being procurable on the way. With considerable misgiving I surveyed my animals, but eventually decided that they would take me to Massowah. I heard that Ras Alula had a letter for me, so I presume that he had expected to find me with the king, or to meet me on the road.

May 1.—At 6.15 we marched and went

over the well-known descent, till at 1.5 we halted near a rill of water close to Ginda. At 2.25 the march was resumed, and then I sent Kassa on to my old balderabba, Sheleka Aria, to convey my compliments, and the intelligence that I was passing down to Sabaguma. I also instructed Kassa to tell the Sheleka how the king had treated me, and that I was carrying a letter from him to the Queen of England. I soon reached the plain, above which, on a hill-top, Sheleka Aria's camp was pitched. While crossing the plain, a few men endeavoured to stop my caravan, adjuring me to stop ; but I, in my turn, adjured them to let me pass unmolested. At the same time I urged on my mule-drivers, and kept the caravan going against considerable opposition. Eventually my assailants, who, for all I knew to the contrary, might have been robbers, gave the matter up as a bad job and retired. We had not gone more than a quarter of a mile farther, before a large body of soldiers arrived, and, running along both sides of my caravan till they reached the leaders, stopped them. Nearly all my men

were then beaten unmercifully with sticks, their swords and other property were taken from them, and the caravan was thrown into indescribable confusion. During this *mêlée* many of my assailants were kicked by my mules, and this they made a pretext of complaint against me. I rode up to try and quell the disturbance, but one man flourished a stick over my head, while another loaded his rifle and pointed it at me. By gesticulating defiantly I made the former desist, and by pointing to the pistol on my saddle I deterred the other from firing. Then my mule was seized by the bridle on either side, and some men tried to dismount me. At this moment, when it became evident that I should soon be overpowered, Kassa arrived on the scene and informed me that Sheleka Aria said I could not pass and must return. I seized this moment to yield to *force majeure*, and turned to retrace my steps.

Then it struck me that it was no use being an Abyssinian Dejaj if I did not turn my exalted rank to account when opportunity offered. So, despite the opposition of my

captors, I succeeded in dismounting, and having unpacked the bundle containing my silk shirts, armlet, and lion's mane, I dressed myself in this attire, to the intense astonishment of the soldiers, and remounted my mule. A few steps farther on, I came in sight of Sheleka Aria and many of his soldiers, and immediately they saw me in this costume his mistake struck Sheleka Aria, and he turned his mule and made off as rapidly as possible. However, I shouted for him to stop, and sent men to tell him to wait for me. Then, very deliberately, I rode up to him, and demanded to know why he had dared to stop me. He replied that he thought I had not the king's seal permitting me to pass. We argued the matter at some length, and with considerable warmth, I on my part gesticulating and flashing my silver-gilt armlet before him as conspicuously as possible. Then he said I might go on, but he would bind Bru, my interpreter. To this I would not assent, and said that as he would not let me take Bru I should come back and camp till the king gave me permission to

go on. This I did, and then, to try and propitiate me, Sheleka Aria sent me a present of a cow.

The cow I firmly refused to accept, in spite of the entreaties of many of Aria's people, as well as of my own interpreter. My refusal was taken as an earnest of my intention not to let the matter blow over as lightly as it was hoped I should. However, the cow went back to its donor.

During the night my interpreters carried messages backwards and forwards. Sheleka then commenced again to ride the high horse, and said I was to come to him at 3.30 a.m. At that hour I sent up interpreters to say that if permission were not accorded immediately for my departure, the consequences would rest with my captor.

As the day broke, my messengers came back and informed me that I could go, and that Sheleka Aria was coming down to see me. The Sheleka soon appeared in person, and, having dressed one of my people in my robes of honour, an equivalent to assuming them myself, and caparisoned my horse and

mule, I received my visitor in state. It was a final attempt on his part to get the hoped-for backsheesh, but long ere this I had decided that backsheesh for Sheleka Aria was out of the question.

In the course of our palaver we came to high words, and the chief then demanded that three of my men should be given up to him. He pointed out the men, and said that he knew I had not taken them up with me, and that they only wished to get to Massowah to enlist as Bashi-Bazouks and fight against him. As there was reason in this, I consented to discharge the men, and I paid them their wages on the spot. The sight of the bag of glittering dollars made the Sheleka's eyes sparkle; but by this time my caravan had nearly all gone, so bidding my tyrant good-bye, I mounted my mule and rode off, before he had half realized that our interview was at an end, and his chances of backsheesh gone.

Two hours and a quarter brought us down to the Sabaguma Plain, and another hour to the Ailet Plain, but some distance east of the

village. The heat was now getting intense, but there being no shade, we kept on steadily till we reached Sahaati, after a march of seven hours and a-half from Ginda. By taking the direct road between Sabaguma and Sahaati, instead of that through Ailet, a saving of nearly six miles is effected, a matter of some importance when one is endeavouring to reach the coast from Ginda in one day. At Sahaati we found the Bashi-Bazouks, but to my surprise they had heard nothing of my approach, so I supposed that my letter from Tohonda had miscarried. Having rested two hours, I set out with a small escort to continue my journey to Massowah, leaving my caravan to follow during the night or next day, at the leisure of my poor exhausted beasts. About half-way between Sahaati and Monkullu I met a large escort, hurrying to meet me, under the command of the head Bouluk-Basha, from whom I learnt that my letter had only reached General Gené that morning, the Shoho courier having been taken ill on his road to the coast.

Three hours' riding and walking brought me to Monkullu, and here all the officers of the garrison came out to meet me. They were not the old friends whom I had left there, but their congratulations and welcome were none the less sincere. Having partaken of their hospitality, and mounted a fresh mule, I trotted on to Massowah, and arrived there in an hour, having been nearly twelve hours in the saddle, during a great part of which time the thermometer stood at 101° in the shade. Between Ailet and Sahaati the heat had been almost overpowering, the hot air thrown off by the scorching rocks threatening at times to stifle one.

VII.

CONCLUSION.

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At Massowah I found my invaluable friend Lieutenant Bonnefoi, of the Italian Navy. After a bath and a luxurious change of raiment, I went to the palace, where dinner was awaiting me. As I consumed it, I entertained Bonnefoi and the General with my views on the state of affairs, and with details of my journey. I had not been comparing notes with General Gené very long, before we discovered that the bag of despatches, which I had forwarded from Asmara six weeks ago, had not arrived; and that though the General had despatched letters to me every week, none had reached me. A correspondence with Sheleka Aria was therefore commenced, as that worthy had acknowledged the receipt of all the letters sent to me; and the bag which I had wished

to send to the coast had been delivered to one of his officers. However, up to the time of my departure from Massowah I had not succeeded in obtaining any information about the missing letters, though I think it probable that Ras Alula may have collected them as they arrived week after week, and was carrying them to me at the king's camp; unfortunately, he went by a different road to that which I took on my return, and so missed me. This theory will not account for the missing bag, the loss of which I think is due to the rascality of Sheleka Aria.

It was indeed a treat to return to comforts to which I had been a stranger for many days; the society at the officers' club, the good wines, and cigars, were all most enjoyable. Then I turned into, or rather on to, a comfortable bed near an open window, for the heat was now considerable, and accustomed as I had been to the keen air of the mountains, sleep forsook me until the early hours of the morning. When I awoke, I prepared the courtyard and some food for both men and animals of my caravan.

They soon arrived, and it was a pleasure to me to be able to welcome them into comfortable quarters, and watch them enjoying a meal in peace, and with the knowledge that their journey was at an end. They all rested during the entire day, and I did very little myself. But next day we set to work in earnest to clean up the gear. Many hours were spent in scrubbing the saddles and putting everything in order for packing. On the following day everything was mustered and stowed in cases ready for shipment; my mules were sold in the market, and fetched very good prices considering their condition; my men were paid off, and I was free to accept an invitation to dinner on board the man-of-war *Garibaldi*. Two days later I sailed in an Italian steamer, the *Venezia*, for Aden. We touched on the voyage at Assab, an Italian settlement, where I again remarked many results of agricultural industry, under natural circumstances, which by any less accomplished husbandmen than the Italians, would have been considered almost to preclude success. From an apparently barren desert soil there had

sprung vegetable produce of many kinds ; the soldiers appeared to take the greatest pride in their little patches of land, and quantities of food were shipped by every opportunity to their comrades at Massowah, where the shortness of their residence has not enabled them yet to provide sufficient for their wants.

At Aden I was hospitably received by Mr. Henley, the well-known agent of the P. and O. Company. In a few days I embarked in the *Hydaspes*, and after a hot voyage up the Red Sea, arrived at Suez, and proceeded thence to Cairo to make my reports. This occupied a few days, and then I received orders to proceed to Rome, and lay before the Government my letters on the duty which I had just completed. The few days spent in Cairo were occupied pleasantly, in spite of the generally inevitable crop of Egyptian boils, from which I now began to suffer. From Cairo I went to Alexandria, where I remained two days before embarking in the *Tanjore* for Brindisi. On the trip across the Mediterranean I made up some, at least, of the sleep lost during the pre-

ceding weeks of toil and travel. Arriving at Brindisi early in the morning, we were soon on again by train. One of my fellow-passengers had a very severe attack of the cholera scare. A few, less severely frightened, alighted at a station and bought fruit, while the scared one would on no account leave the railway carriage, but stood on the step vainly beseeching and imploring his travelling companions to desist from their foolhardy purpose. His imploring fell on heedless ears, however; so seeing them about to return to the train laden with baskets of cherries, he retired precipitately into the carriage and closed the door against them, and was only finally induced to admit them on account of the superior strength of the combined delinquents. Whether his terror had any foundation, or was justified by his subsequently contracting the cholera as well as the scare, I never knew, for at Foggia we separated. One passenger accompanied me to Rome, where we arrived early on Sunday morning, after a comfortable night in a *coupé*. Not so my luggage, however; therefore, after having

removed the travel-stains from my dusty self, I was forced to attire in a borrowed suit of pyjamas, and keep my room, till my baggage arrived later in the day. Then my companion and I drove about the town and gardens, and had the good fortune to see their Majesties the King and Queen, and the Prince. The sights of Rome have no place in the story of a visit to the King of Zion, so I must content myself with mentioning that my companion and I "did" them, as thoroughly as was possible in a week, with the aid of a good guide, and the best carriages we could get. Interviews with ambassadors, and ministers, dinners and receptions, filled up the time, and I shall always entertain the liveliest recollections of the hospitality which I received on every hand in Rome. General Pozzolini, and my old friends of his recalled mission, seemed to vie with one another in their kindness to me, though I fear that the success of my journey must have embittered the remnants of their disappointment at not having been allowed to accompany me. Of the political reasons

which may have led to their recall it would be out of place here to speak ; but I shared, to the full, their regret that we should not have been *compagnons de voyage* in a country which presents to the traveller such features of novelty and interest as Abyssinia does. From Rome, my friend and I went, *viâ* St. Gothard, to Basle. On the journey we shared a carriage with an apparently newly-married couple. The sudden and unexpected emergings from the numerous tunnels through which we passed, must have been almost as embarrassing to the couple, as they were amusing to my companion and myself. Never having been a newly-married couple myself, I cannot claim to speak with authority on the point of their embarrassment ; but I can do so with regard to our amusement. Suppressed merriment at last rocked me to sleep ; but I shortly awoke with a violent start, and so frightened a quiet elderly lady, sitting next to me, that she dropped her book, spectacles, reticule, and the miscellaneous load of travelling requisites which bestrewed her ample lap, and was about to make her

escape into an adjacent lake, when I assured her that I was better, and that there was really no further cause for alarm. At Basle my friend and I had a farewell dinner together, and then parted. I proceeded by a night train to Calais and crossed to Dover. While lunching at Calais, I made the acquaintance of a gentleman whom I had noticed on the previous evening at Basle. I have ever since been consumed by a curiosity to know who he was. Evidently a German of position, he had fought in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–1, had a personal acquaintance with Her Majesty and Osborne, chatted in a friendly strain of other royalties known to me only at a distance, and was received with distinction and red baize on arrival at Dover. His tender solicitude for the safety of one of the sailors, who had taken a seat on his all-too fragile hat-box, was expressed in so gracious a manner, that the sailor vacated his seat far more smilingly than he would probably have done, had the reason urged for his doing so, been a regard for the contents of the hat-box. At Dover the

production of my passport, endorsed in red ink, "Charged with despatches for Her Majesty's Government," freed me from a rigorous inspection of my baggage—though, as it was Sunday, I considered it unnecessary to continue my journey to London till the next day. I arrived on the steps of the Foreign Office somewhat early, at the same moment as Her Majesty's *attaché* from Vienna, so a messenger took our names and despatch-bags, and let us go. A few days sufficed to close up my affairs, and then I ceased to be Her Majesty's Special Envoy to the King of Abyssinia: my ride to the King of Zion was at an

END.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX I.

Route from Massowah to Lake Ashangi, by way of Asmara, Abbi Addy, and Antalo.

Stations.	Distance in Hours.	Direction (Approximate).	Height (Approximate).	Remarks.
	H. M.		Feet.	
Massowah	...	W. by S.	...	
Monkullu'...	1 15	...	100	Road level and sandy.
Sahaati	3 15	...	500	Road level and sandy. Good water.
Ailet	3 30	S.	1,000	A short ascent from Sahaati, then fairly level.
Sabaguma	2 10	...	1,120	
Ginda	2 53	W. by S.	3,000	Ascent rocky, and in places very steep.
Arigzana	2 0	...	3,500	
Felagoby	2 0	...	4,450	Between Felagoby and Mahenzie the
Mahenzie...	3 5	...	6,600	Averobe Pass (6,500 feet) is crossed;
Asmara (village) ...	1 30	S.S.E.	7,600	and between Mahenzie and Asmara the Mahenzie Pass (8,000 feet).
Averentante, near Addy Hawisha ...	2 40	...	7,600	Two steep valleys are crossed.
Woghartie	2 35	...	7,500	Camp ground with water ¼-hour before village.
Gura...	4 0	...	6,600	In dry season, water ½-mile beyond village.
Mount Tahuila ...	8 0	...	...	There is a better and shorter road than the one I traversed.
Balasa River	7 20	...	5,300	Over hot plain. Streams Logo and Tserana are crossed, 3 hours 20 minutes and 4¾ hours respectively from Tahuila.
Barheuila, on side of table-land	2 0	...	6,025	Long ascent from bed of Balasa to table-land of Igulla.
Hosha Guza	2 0	...	6,250	Lies to the left of the direct road.
Dagasanuie	7 45	S. by E.	6,500	Market town. River Angueya is crossed.
Mai Feras	4 30	...	6,400	Ascent and descent of 1,000 feet.
Tsedia	3 15	...	...	Spurs of Ambas Haheile and Saneyti are crossed.
Gullibudda	8 30	S. by W.	5,700	The River Weri is crossed 1¾ hours before Gullihudda.
Abbi Addy	7 30	S.E. & E.	6,175	Takherakira an hour before Abbi Addy.
Dookwani	9 15	...	7,200	Gueba River 5¼ hours from Abbi Addy.
Antalo	8 15	S.W. & S.	7,850	Many villages passed. An elevation of 8,300 feet crossed.
Beit Mariam	7 45	...	8,000	Road mostly over well-watered plain.
Debar	8 25	...	9,475	Crossed Alajie (12,000 feet) and Debar Passes.
Lake Ashangi... ...	6 0	...	7,650	

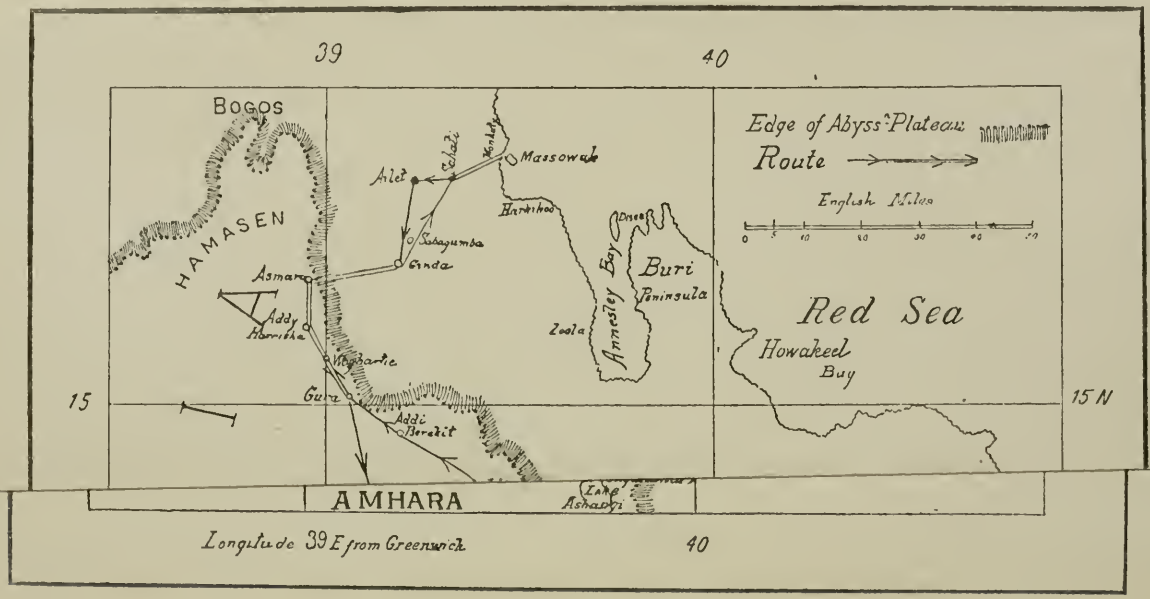
Note.—Each day's march is divided off by horizontal lines.

APPENDIX II.

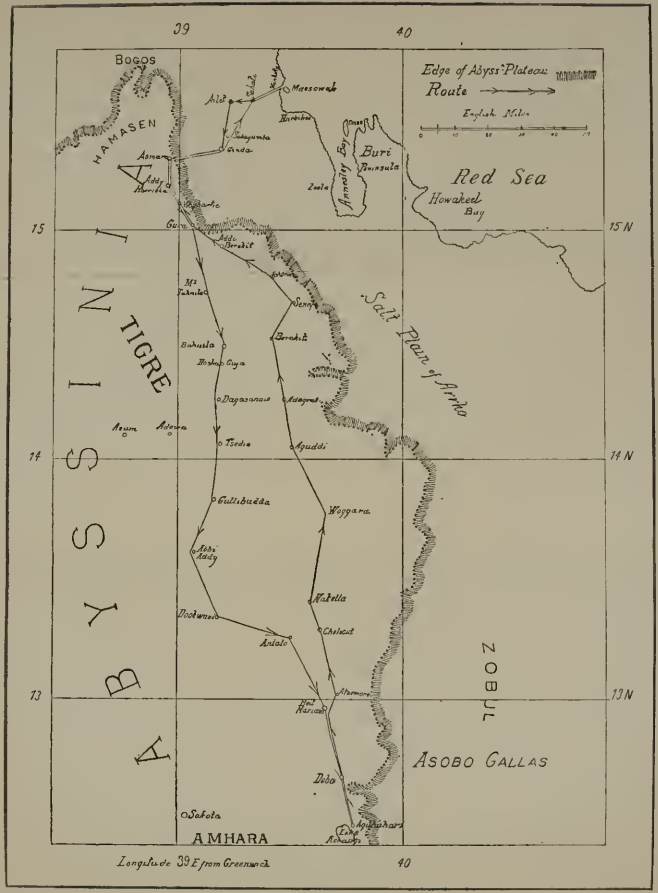
TABLE of Distances from Lake Ashangi to Massowah, by way of Chelicut, Adegrat, and Asmara.

Places.	Distance in hours.	Remarks.
	H. M.	
Ashangi Lake.		
Debar	6 0	The Debar Pass is about an hour's march farther north.
Atsemoren	9 10	At foot of ascent to Alajie.
Chelicut	8 10	
Mekelle	3 15	
W'oggara	10 0	Near entrance to Dongola defile.
Beyond Aguddi	9 45	
Adegrat	7 0	
West of Barakit ...	8 40	
Senafe (village) ...	5 15	
Tohonda	4 15	
Near Addi Berakit ...	9 10	
Inadotta	3 0	
Dak Amhari	2 10	
Woghartie	2 35	The water is quarter of an hour north of Woghartie Hill.
Asmara	5 15	
Mahenzie Pass	1 0	
Mahenzie	0 35	Camping ground.
Averobe Pass	0 36	
Felagoby	1 25	Ditto.
Arigzana	1 48	Ditto.
Ginda	1 30	During the hot weather Sabaguma should be reached, if possible, to avoid march across the plains to Sahaati in the heat of the day.
Sabaguma	2 15	
Sahaati	5 0	Springs of good water.
Monkullu	3 30	Wells.
Massowah	1 15	

NOTE.—Each day's march is divided off by horizontal lines.


39
40
BOGOS
HAMASEN
Massowah
Ailet
Sabagumba
Ginda
Asmara
Addy
Harricha
Gura
Addi
Berekit
Harkiko
Zoola
Annesley Bay
Buri
Peninsula
Red Sea
Howakeel
Bay
Edge of Abyss^n Plateau
Route
English Miles
15
15 N
AMHARA
Lake
Ashangi
Longitude 39 E from Greenwich
40

APPENDIX III.



APPENDIX IV.

Glossary of Abyssinian Terms.

Aboona	High Priest.
Addi	Village.
Alaca	Priest.
Amba	Wall-sided hill.
Angareb	Bed, or Couch.
Balderabba	Introducer, or Go-between.
Dejaj	A high rank.
Gombo	Earthen vessel.
Lij	An esquire.
Mai	Water, river, &c.
Mariam	The Virgin Mary.
Merghaf	A superior shamma.
Ras	The next rank to the King.
Shamma	The native shawl or toga.
Tedge	The usual beverage.

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